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BISHOPS

PIONEERS OF CHRISTENDOM

I
BISHOPS

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Justum deduxit Dominus per vias rectas et ostendit illi regnum Dei, et dedit illi scientiam sanctorum: honestavit illum in laboribus, et complevit labores illius.

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FOREWORD

SOME time ago a friend suggested to me that it would be interesting to make a study of the part which the great Christian saints have played in the development of Europe. If properly carried out it would, of course, be different from a history of the political theories which the saints have held, and even more from that of their ascetical doctrine. It would have to take note of these, but would be more immediately concerned with the saints as men of action.

I have tried to make a beginning and this little book is the result. The choice of saints was more or less arbitrary, but I selected from those who seemed to me to have been important in the process by which the Roman Empire of the fourth century passed into the Christendom of the eleventh. I chose Ambrose because he upheld that tradition of the relations of Church and State which the

Christian kingdoms were to inherit; Martin because he prepared the Christian society in which the most typical of these kingdoms was to be formed by a barbarian race; Wilfrid, Boniface and Dunstan because they played important parts in the formation of these kingdoms at different stages of their development. Needless to say I have made use of many previous biographies and studies, but I have only indicated those which I found most useful; it seemed unnecessary to overload these slight essays with long bibliographies. I have, however, given references to the sources on which I base my conclusions and, in the few cases where these differ from those commonly received, I have indicated my reasons in a note.

Only after writing the first four essays did I realize that all the subjects were bishops and, save perhaps in the case of Ambrose, lived under a monastic rule. I do not, however, regret my choice for that reason. Though the influence of each saint was felt outside his diocese during his life, and though it became after his death almost European by reason of his reputation and in some cases of his writings, the episcopal and monastic characters were, in my opinion, of supreme importance to Europe during these

centuries. The limited territorial jurisdiction and permanence of the Christian bishopric seem to me to have been the most potent factor in educating the barbarians to the settled habits which are a necessary preliminary to civilization. At the same time I think their first acceptance of Christianity was often due to an admiration for the asceticism of the monks.

To a slight extent then I have found an answer to the question with which I started, but I am very conscious of the superficiality of that answer. I had hoped to find, further, some intimate connection between the sanctity of these men and their success. In this I have failed completely; and, because I have failed to find it in the historical sources, I have written what I believe to be the true answer at the head of this little book.

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S. AMBROSE

I

It was the year 374 A.D. and the city of Milan was assisting at the election of its bishop. Already it had become one of the second cities of the Roman Empire and numbered nearly a hundred thousand inhabitants. The official residence of the emperors was Constantinople, but the court was often fixed at Milan when the affairs of the West were of importance. It lay on the road from the East, and was a convenient centre from which expeditions or couriers could be sent to Gaul, Spain, and Britain. A warlike emperor careful of the frontiers might fix his court and his government at Trier, but for the ordinary despatch of business Milan was more suitable. Rome bore the historic name and was the seat of the senate and a great aristocracy. Perhaps for this reason, as well as because Milan was better placed on the imperial road system, the Roman central government, which was the court, seldom found itself in Rome.

Nearly two generations earlier the Empire had become officially Christian. The numbers who belonged to the Catholic Church had enormously increased, the wealth and importance of its bishops had become correspondingly great, but the results were disappointing. Many of the educated laymen were content to postpone their formal instruction in the Christian faith, and their baptism, till death, perpetuating thereby a custom which had been natural when the religion was proscribed, and which had been useful then as a precaution against insincere converts. The imperial court had formed its own entourage of bishops and, as patron of the Church and guardian of order, it had perforce to exercise a powerful influence on ecclesiastical politics. The first serious heresy of the century received strong support from several emperors, who had practically imposed on the whole Eastern and on most of the Western world bishops who denied to Jesus Christ the fullness of the Godhead. This heresy had been condemned by a large assembly of bishops at Nicæa but, by the exclusion and exile of a few intransigeants such as Athanasius and Hilary, by the sycophancy of many and the conviction of some, the decision was for practical purposes reversed in a large majority of dioceses. The Popes of Rome remained faithful, but by force or fraud they had been silenced; and at last it was put about that even Liberius, bishop of Rome, hitherto a

supporter of Athanasius and the Nicene definition, had given his assent, or at least withheld his condemnation, of a compromising but not explicit formula.

In these circumstances the authority of the episcopate over the faithful, which Irenæus and Cyprian in the days of persecution had attested as being one and the same for all the Church, had ceased to be of account. Amongst those who followed the creed of Nicæa Athanasius and Hilary were the spokesmen, but neither claimed to be leader or head. Both of them looked to Rome, but the Roman bishops had not been of outstanding vigour or intellect for many a year. The others, Arians as they were called from him who was said first to have taught their doctrine, subordinated episcopal authority to the whim of the emperor. These bishops were turning the Church into a department of the Roman State, and the officers of the central government, the members of the imperial household, presided and guided and supervised the assemblies of bishops as they did the administration of the Empire.

Julian, who became emperor in 361 A.D., was a convinced Pagan, and for this reason he unconsciously delivered the Christian Church from bondage. Anxious only to promote the quarrels of the bishops, he allowed the exiled ones to return, and Arianism withered when the imperial

hand no longer tended its growth. In the West Nicene orthodoxy was mainly restored, in the East it reasserted itself vigorously. It had never ceased to retain the loyalty of the Christian people; it alone had the figure of the divine claim. But while orthodoxy recovered its strength in the ecclesiastical organization, some aristocratic families revived their Paganism. Julian's death left them very strong in Rome itself, where they numbered many in the senate and in the schools of rhetoric in which so many of the administrators of the Empire were formed.

The Pagan reaction was shortlived, for Valentinian, Julian's successor, a good soldier and capable ruler, was a sincere Christian. He upheld the traditions of his predecessors, and his chief ambition was the maintenance of the order and security of the Empire. In both he was successful. But though Valentinian himself professed the creed of Nicæa he did not revive the amateur theology of Constantius. Religious dissension had been the source of disorder and Valentinian, a capable administrator, sought its solution in the Roman way; the central government saw that the authority of the local magistrates should not overlap and that the authority of each should be undisturbed. The orthodox bishops of Gaul had been rightfully elected and their opponents were suppressed. Equally Auxentius, bishop of Milan, though an

Arian and the leader of the heresy, was rightfully bishop, for his ejected predecessor Denis had died in exile; therefore his authority was to be respected, as Hilary found when he sought to disturb the centre of heresy at Milan.[1]

Auxentius died in 374 A.D., and the bishops of the district, to whom the election of a successor belonged, knew that strife was likely, for both parties were present amongst the clergy and people. They knew also that the bishop of Milan would necessarily be brought into contact with the emperor, and so they asked Valentinian to choose. His reply reminded them that this was the duty of the bishops, and the emperor promised willingly to learn the faith from whomsoever they chose. Valentinian remained true to his principle. The bishop's authority should be undisturbed even by the emperor himself.

The election took place in the chief basilica of Milan. Technically the choice lay with the bishops, but the consent of the people had to be obtained and they crowded the church and disputed the rival claims of Arianism and orthodoxy. An outsider would have called it a tumult. So it was reported to the governor of the province, Ambrose, who was responsible for the maintenance of order in the city. Still a young man (he was in the thirties) he had been appointed a year before from the staff of the

[1] Jullian *Histoire de la Gaule*, VII, 253.

pretorian prefect of Italy. His father had held that office in Gaul—had been in fact the highest magistrate of the Empire beyond the Alps. The emperors had for long entrusted these posts to the great aristocrats of the Roman world and, though they were strictly supervised by the central government which formed the imperial court, they enjoyed vast powers, judicial, fiscal, and administrative. The whole system was impregnated with the traditions of the Antonine emperors, and the best virtues of government, prudence, thoroughness and severity were the ideals set before the officials. In this society Ambrose had been brought up, and when his father died (he was but a youth at the time) he had been sent to Rome to be trained in the schools of the city. Such a step was preparatory for the paternal career; the emperors of the fourth century were careful as a rule to keep the civil administration in the hands of cultured men appreciative of the best traditions and literature of the Roman tongue. Ambrose's family was Christian, but the boys (he had an elder brother Satyrus), like others of their class, had not yet received Christian instruction or baptism. Their sister, however, had been consecrated as a Christian virgin by Pope Liberius himself,[1] and Ambrose, though he seems to have regarded religion without any enthusiasm, was in no way a sceptic. He

[1] Ambrose, *De Virginibus*, III, 1.

was virtuous, and the nearest modern parallel would be the French or Italian aristocrat who is *croyant* but not *pratiquant*.

He must have been competent in his profession —he was attached to the staff of Probus, the pretorian prefect of Italy—for he was sent in 372 A.D. to be governor of the northern provinces. Though this post was subordinate to the prefect the appointments were directly supervised by the central government, and Ambrose's qualities must therefore have been known to them. In sending Ambrose north Probus had told him to act like a bishop and not like a magistrate,[1] but whether the older man meant this as a recommendation to employ mild measures is not certain: the magistrates of the fourth century might well regard themselves as bound to moderate religious quarrels especially when, as in Milan, many disorders had flown therefrom.

Ambrose then, imposing in build, imposing by reason of his authority, respected for a year's mild but strict administration, sure of his traditions, the traditions of imperial Rome and a wide culture, came to the basilica to see that the election of a bishop should be carried out decently and in order. He addressed the multitude and obtained silence. It was broken by a child's voice "Ambrose, Bishop." The crowd, to whom the idea was new, took it up and, to the annoy-

[1] V.A., 8.

ance of the assembled bishops and of Ambrose, the basilica soon rang to the excited cries: "Ambrose is bishop."[1]

Such an election was contrary to the laws of State and Church. An imperial edict forbade the Roman magistrates from entering the ranks of the clergy; a canon of the council of Nicæa forbade the election of those who had but recently been baptized. Ambrose was not yet baptized. Both laws could, of course, be dispensed by competent authority; the emperor could dispense from the rule which he had made; the bishops could ignore—it had been done on other occasions—a disciplinary regulation. It was at any rate unsafe and irregular to appoint another person against the expressed and unanimous will of the faithful; and in any case someone like Ambrose must be found who was identified with neither religious party.

The greatest opposition, however, came from the man himself. There is nothing to suggest that he was ambitious of the honour. His career was already safe and his present authority was greater, as things then stood, than that which he would enjoy as bishop. In the East it is true a few court bishops had exercised great influence through their calling, but this was not likely to be the case while Valentinian was emperor, nor had it been known in the West. The administra-

[1] V.A., 6.

tive career, on which Ambrose was well launched and in which his family and friends could help him further, had greater rewards for a man of governing ability. His actions on the following days leave no doubt as to his own wishes. He tried to convince the populace of his unsuitability. A prisoner was on trial and Ambrose used the full rigour of Roman procedure to make him admit his crime. He had women of the streets brought to his house that all might think him unworthy of the office. The people laughed and reminded him that baptism once received would remit all the sins which he committed.[1] Meanwhile the bishops, wishing to avoid decision, sent to the emperor asking if he would confirm Ambrose's election. Instead of the expected negative, Valentinian's answer was that he would be delighted if such an excellent governor should be appointed to rule the Church of God in Milan. When the bishops surrendered to the appeal of the mob Ambrose left the city and stayed with a friend in the country. The imperial wish left this friend in an awkward position and, to save complications, he revealed Ambrose's retreat.

Like all governing races the Romans were ever ready to seek external warrants for their course of action, and this habit did not cease when they became Christian. The demands of the people, the unwilling assent of the bishops, the emperor's

[1] V.A., 7.

pleasure were interpreted by Ambrose as a sign of the will of God. He received instruction in Christian doctrine, was baptized on November 30, and was consecrated bishop a week later.

II

It was a new thing for one who had held high governing authority in the Empire to be called to the office and work of a bishop. It was then also comparatively rare for one trained in the Western schools of rhetoric to receive episcopal consecration. Whatever Ambrose did, his appointment was likely to be the beginning of a new tradition. It might mean that the Church would become more permeated with the notions of the Empire, that the work of Church government would be more definitely directed to maintaining order and peace, to the accumulation and administration of large estates. The bishop of Milan would be brought into frequent contact with the court. A new emperor might follow the example either of Constantius, Julian, or Valentinian. If he decided to enforce an imperial theology, or if he tried to restore Paganism, or if he tried to maintain the independent authority of each bishop, the position and attitude of Ambrose would be important. The bishop of Milan might try to create for him-

self a position equivalent to that of the bishop of Constantinople, who by reason of his relations with the court had become ecclesiastically the most important bishop in the East. Practically Ambrose could have looked forward to displacing the bishop of Rome as the centre of the Catholic Church, even though such a course would sooner or later have led to schism. Even if Valentinian's own policy was continued, and the imperial government maintained its own preserve jealously but left worship and worship only to the sole control of the bishop, Ambrose would have to decide occasionally whether he could treat the head of the Roman State as an ordinary Christian. Already in the East the bishops seemed tacitly to have agreed that they had no moral authority over imperial acts, even though these were the work of a Christian emperor.

At the time of Ambrose's election his ecclesiastical party was unknown. True his family were Roman, and had therefore followed the fortunes of the Nicæans. But the question had at the moment become one of persons rather than doctrines. Formulæ which were equivalent to the Nicene definition were the vogue, while the discontented but secret Arians attempted rather to discredit and render impotent the great successors of Athanasius. Especially they were maintaining a close alliance of bishops who were not ultra-orthodox, and ignoring, as far as they could, the

bishop of Rome. Had Ambrose chosen to lead this party he could almost certainly have done so.

The first ten years of his episcopate resolved some of these questions. He showed himself at once a firm supporter of Nicæa. Denis, the orthodox bishop of Milan, had been exiled to make room for Auxentius and had died in exile. Ambrose caused his remains to be brought back in triumph to the cathedral at Milan. S. Basil had been one of the leaders of orthodoxy in the East, both in word and suffering; Ambrose sought his approbation.

Above all the new bishop showed that he regarded the communion of Rome as the touchstone of orthodoxy. In the year 379 A.D. he was preaching at his brother's funeral and had occasion to refer to the faith of the Church of Sardinia. His brother, he said, had asked whether it held communion with the Catholic bishops. This was the ordinary phrase for describing the Nicene party, but Ambrose added an explanation; "that is, whether they held communion with the Roman Church." He was also the moving spirit of an ecclesiastical council held at Aquileia in the year 381 A.D. It condemned and deposed two bishops who were suspected of Arianism. One of them complained subsequently that Ambrose had made himself the servant, the mouthpiece of the bishop of Rome. And there was evidence for this statement. Although Ambrose had not presided,

he had communicated to the council the instructions of Pope Damasus; and the letter of the council itself, approved and probably inspired by Ambrose, urged the emperor not to disturb nor allow others to disturb the holy faith of the apostles which was that of the Roman Church, the head of the Roman world.[1] For a generation the creed of Nicæa had been defended because it was traditional, because it had been defined by a large assembly of bishops, representative of the universal episcopate. Now it was in danger because men offered various interpretations, and many could doubt whether a majority of the bishops would not consent to modifying its teaching. Against the danger Ambrose proclaimed another tradition and an older test, a test which had been proclaimed by Irenæus of Lyons and hinted at by Ignatius of Antioch.[2] The faith of the universal episcopate, seldom heard in united assembly, was the same as the faith of the Roman Church, the faith of the apostolic see par excellence; whoever was separate from the communion of the bishop of Rome was separate from the Catholic bishops, and had no place in the universal episcopate.

[1] Batiffol, *La Siège Apostolique*, 21-30.

[2] Irenæus, *Contra Hæreses*, 3, III, 2; Ignatius, *ad Romanos, Proœmium.*

III

In reasserting his own dependence and that of all other bishops on the Roman pontiff, Ambrose rendered a great service to the Catholic Church, for he thereby showed the way by which the evils, consequent on the Arian heresy, could be destroyed. He was to render a yet greater service to Christendom in later years when he established the tradition that the Church must judge the morality of actions of state. But in considering these aspects of his career it is easy to forget that he was a great pastor, the teacher of his flock, the protector of the poor, the priest who brought men to God. When called to the episcopate he was uninstructed in Christian lore, and he set himself at once to remedy the defect by a constant unwearying study of the Scriptures and of the great commentators of the East, Origen, Athanasius, Basil, and Gregory of Nazianzen. Augustine, the most famous of his converts, has left a description of the great bishop at work, has told how he devoted every free moment of a busy day to study, so that Augustine was almost afraid to break in on his meditations.[1] It was really necessary work, for Ambrose desired above all to teach his people. Indeed, as he said with some

[1] Augustine, *Confessions*, VI, 3.

exaggeration, he had to teach his people even before he had learnt himself.[1] So in the first ten years of his pontificate he published treatises on the Incarnation, on the Holy Spirit, on Penitence and Virginity, as well as commentaries on the book of Genesis, and these were followed by even larger works in later years. His treatises, however, were usually the almost verbatim reports of his sermons, and they have the untidiness and the occasional superficiality of the spoken word. Still there can be seen in them all the capable, systematizing mind of the Roman administrator, able to measure and retain and use the judgment of another. But something has been lost, for we can no longer realize the eloquence with which they were delivered. Except in rare cases, and only when the language continues in daily use, can this quality be gathered from the written record. It depends too much on the presence, the character, the conviction of the living speaker. In the case of Ambrose, however, we have the testimony of Augustine, no mean judge of Christian and Pagan rhetoric. Not once only has he dwelt on the joy with which he listened to the bishop of Milan even before he intended to become a convert, and he placed him with S. Cyprian as a model for those who would expound Christian doctrine.[2]

When Ambrose is remembered as a preacher,

[1] *De Officiis*, I, 1.
[2] *Confessions*, V, 13; *De doctrina Christiana*, IV, 21.

men are apt to dwell on his stern denunciation of the greed for riches and his exhortations to alms-giving. The theme, it is true, does often recur in all his works, and it is the burden of his treatise on Naboth's vineyard, a treatise which is built up round this passage: "Perchance you will say, as indeed you do say, that we ought not to give to those whom God has cursed, since he wills that they should be poor. But the poor are not under a curse for it is written: Blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. It is of the rich and not of the poor that the Scriptures say: He that hideth up corn shall be cursed. Therefore don't inquire what every beggar deserves. Mercy is accustomed to give aid to necessity, not to judge about merits; to help the poor, not to make inquisition about justice. It is written: Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor. And who can be said to understand the poor? It is he who has pity on them, who recognizes that he is of the same nature as they, that the Lord made both poor and rich; who knows that he sanctifies his own income if he sets apart a portion for the needy. Therefore when you have enough to give alms, do not put it off saying: I will give something to-morrow, lest you lose the opportunity of giving. It is dangerous to delay over another's safety; while you hesitate the beggar may die." [1]

[1] *De Nabuthe*, VIII, 40.

Ambrose set his people a good example in the matter of Christian charity. At the beginning of his pontificate he transferred the title of his property to the poor, reserving only an income for his sister and brother during their lives.[1] Augustine dwells on the patience with which he applied himself to the service of those who sought his aid—a service not strictly obligatory on a bishop—settling their quarrels and assisting them in their temporal troubles, even though it meant the interruption of his studies.[2] His charity became famous in Milan and his own remarks on the care one should take to moderate one's bounty, to seek out the really indigent and to suspect the clamorous beggar, though maxims for the prudent philanthropist, were probably little more than the criticisms which he passed on his own large-handedness.[3]

Nor did he evade the far more irksome but, for a bishop, more important duty of making his friends give liberally to the poor. When he happened to be at Rome during a famine he forced his hosts to expend their fortune on the sufferers. The same characteristic appears in the story of his relations with the Emperor Gratian, Valentinian's son and successor in the western half of the Empire. The youth—he began his reign at the

[1] V.A., 38.
[2] *Confessions*, VI, 3.
[3] Ambrose, *de Officiis*, 2, XVI, 76.

age of sixteen—had been taught the Christian faith by Ambrose and was devoted to his master. But he had an even greater appreciation of the joys of hunting, and gave orders that no one should be allowed to approach him on business on days allotted to that recreation. Generally speaking Ambrose, like everyone else, had to respect such orders, but the bishop had no hesitation about breaking them if his cause was one of mercy. So, it was told of him, he forced his way past the imperial guards to plead for mercy for a condemned criminal, even though he must have known that to risk Gratian's anger was to open the way for the Arians who were still represented at the imperial court.[1]

The best Pagan traditions had also taught the duty of liberality to the poor, and Ambrose was far from despising their teaching on this and other mundane virtues. But he added to it something specifically Christian. They had taught virtue as the only means to a really happy life; Ambrose taught that life to be happy which leads to eternal life.[2] They had taught men to strive after virtue, he showed them the work of the grace of God.[3] And if we would form an accurate picture of Ambrose's teaching, we must remember that it was devoted chiefly to that life which is specifically

[1] V.A., 18.
[2] *De Officiis*, 2, IV, 17, and 2, II, 5.
[3] *De Mysteriis*, VIII, 43.

Christian and has nothing in common with Paganism. He taught them the duty of faith and of worship. He taught them the virtue of prayer and mortification, such as he practised himself. These form the subjects of the greater part of his writings. Above all he taught, more even than other bishops,[1] the excellence of virginity. The Church from the earliest years had encouraged and blessed those women who consecrated themselves wholly to the service of God, giving their goods to charity, their bodies to worship. It may be that Ambrose's experience as a magistrate and a bishop reminded him that all were not called to this great virtue, for he was always careful to avoid the least suggestion that marriage was unworthy, and so he saved himself from the errors of some of the Eastern writers. Nevertheless he taught without hesitation that virginity, the entire sacrifice of even legitimate married happiness to the honour of God, is the greatest vocation which the Church can offer. His own sister had been thus consecrated, and Ambrose himself consecrated many others.

So in great part Ambrose's twenty odd years as a bishop were passed. He taught his flock the faith of the Catholic Church; his preaching brought new converts to the fold, not only men like Augustine, for such cases were rare, but the hundreds of humble folk of Milan to whom, year

[1] *Jerome Ep.*, XXII, 10.

by year, he taught the Christian mysteries and whom he baptized on Holy Saturday. He raised the standard of asceticism in the West, in the midst of a luxurious society, both by example and by preaching. In all this work he was prosperous and famous so that, after his death, men said that his blessing and even his presence had restored health to the sick.[1]

IV

Yet it is not for this pastoral work that Ambrose is remembered. He was brought occasionally into contact with the Roman Government, and his action created a tradition which was to be of supreme moment to the development of Europe. As the friend and moral tutor of the young Emperor Gratian, Ambrose wielded, even before the year 383 A.D., considerable political influence. Perhaps it was due to his counsel that Gratian attacked the remaining Paganism of Rome, supported though it was by many senatorial families. He confiscated to the State the endowments which for centuries had been used to support the Vestal virgins, of whom a small number remained despite the widespread abandonment of Paganism. He had the Altar of Victory removed from the senate, even though the Pagan

[1] V.A., 10, 21.

senators protested that the Christian emperors had tolerated, while ignoring, this relic of the ancient religion of the State. Even if Ambrose had no direct influence on these decisions, he at least encouraged the youthful emperor to believe that his firm adhesion to the Christian religion and to the Catholic Church (as against Arianism) would bring God's blessing on his temporal rule. When Gratian set out for the East in 377 A.D. to assist his uncle against the Goths, he asked Ambrose for such instruction as would enable him to maintain his faith amongst those surroundings where Arianism was still powerful. The treatise *De Fide* was written in answer to this request. In it Ambrose proclaims plainly his belief that the victories of civilization and the peace of the Roman Empire depend directly on the will of God, and that these blessings are given only to emperors who are faithful Christians. See, he said, how the East is now suffering from the barbarians (Valens was hard pressed by the Goths), that East which permitted the sacrilegious teaching of the Arians. Italy, faithful to the Nicene creed, is ruled by an emperor whose faith is true, and is at peace. Victory, he told the emperor, is more often the reward of the prince's faith than of the valour of his men.[1] The course of that campaign might well have confirmed Gratian in this simple belief. Valens was over-

[1] *De Fide*, I, *Prologus*, 3.

whelmed and killed at Adrianople, Gratian restored the Roman authority and raised to the purple the leader of the army, Theodosius, a Catholic like himself, who completed the task of restoration. It may have been in thanksgiving for these successes that, in 382 A.D., Gratian destroyed the Altar of Victory in the Roman capitol.

The simple relation which Ambrose had sketched between the prosperity of this world and the service of the true God received the lie in the facts of the following year. While Gratian was in Gaul Maximus, a Spaniard who had commanded the Roman army in Britain, revolted against his authority. The emperor could not rely on the loyalty of his own troops and was assassinated by a local magistrate. Maximus assumed the imperial purple and was accepted and obeyed beyond the Alps. True that this was not a revolt against civilization: Maximus was no barbarian nor did he rely on their aid. True that it was not an attack on Catholicism: Maximus was ready then to use the sword for the repression of heresy. But Gratian had been the orthodox emperor, the faithful pupil in matters of faith; and it was reported to Ambrose that in his death he called on the name of his teacher.

Ambrose had reason to dwell on the tragedy of Gratian. The latter was succeeded by his brother Valentinian II, a child of twelve, whose claim was put forward by his mother. Only Italy and

Illyricum accepted his authority and Maximus threatened to march on Milan. Justina, Valentinian's mother, appealed to Ambrose to go as ambassador to Maximus, to obtain if possible that he should be content with the transalpine lands, to obtain at least such a delay that Theodosius might come to the help of Valentinian, and that the Alpine passes might be put into a state of defence. Ambrose carried out the mission in a manner which testified rather to his courage than to his desire for fame as a diplomat. Possibly his bold bearing and indubitable loyalty helped Maximus to consider seriously before risking a possible war with Theodosius. At any rate the usurper remained for the time content with the transalpine lands.

As yet there had been no occasion for Ambrose to formulate his doctrine on the relations between Church and State and on the duties of a Christian ruler. He had exercised his influence over an emperor who had been a willing pupil, he had readily undertaken a political task which, as he said on another occasion, was almost an episcopal duty, for it was to protect an orphan's rights; but he had not yet been called upon to declare with authority what the State should do, he had not yet had to say how far a bishop might be the servant of emperors. We may be fairly confident that a man as busy and practical as Ambrose had not considered the question fully, though his daily

habit of meditating on the Sacred Scriptures and the duties of the Christian life must often have brought it to his mind. It was, however, forced on his attention when he returned from the court of Maximus. The Pagan senators of Rome had appealed to the young Valentinian for the restoration of the Altar of Victory and the confiscated goods of the Vestal virgins, and Justina and her council were disposed to make a favourable reply.

The address was composed by Symmachus, the prefect of Rome, an upright man and a convinced Pagan, and his work set forth the affection the old religion could still claim from a Roman heart, while the fact that it was addressed to a Christian was not forgotten. There was the appeal to tradition. The emperors of the past had either honoured the deity or permitted the altar to stand. The emperors of the fourth century had chosen as their standard the traditions of Roman history; it was the constant theme of the addresses and panegyrics which were so frequent a feature of public life, and it set before them an ideal while it reminded them too of the expectation of their citizens. It was an appeal which Valentinian and his mother, anxious as they were to retain the affection of the Italian provinces, were not likely to ignore. There was the appeal to common sense. All emperors desired victory, victory at least over the barbarians. How could they forbid others to worship what they desired? Valentinian could not

but desire victory. There was the care for his Christian prejudices. He would but give honour to the name, while others might invoke the deity. There was the appeal to the sensible attitude of Rome to religion. It was a necessary adjunct of civil life. Ordinary folk need the present appeal of religion to keep them upright: there was no agreement about creed, but all men, Constantine as well as Julian, Christian as well as Pagan, had accepted the altar as a symbol. Skilfully Symmachus wove with his argument a claim of justice for the Pagan citizen, of duty on the part of the emperor. Did the latter wish to forbid them to follow that religion which had made their forefathers happy; did he wish to destroy their methods of honouring God? The emperor was the embodiment of the Roman world, his word could make and unmake, but it was his duty to be loved, honoured, reverenced. Who could judge him but posterity and how would they judge but according as he preserved the traditions of Rome, and measured justice with an equal hand to the citizens? Into the mouth of Rome Symmachus put his last arguments. It was no plea for polytheism or for the maintenance by the State of many creeds. Fitting it was that the deity whom all worshipped should be thought to be one. But how each came to his throne mattered little. Everyone would not pierce by one road to the great secret of the universe. Let the emperor

put the strife of creeds on one side and grant the prayers of those who wished to travel by the paths of their ancestors.[1]

When Ambrose returned to Milan in 384 A.D. he heard that this petition had been officially considered by the emperor, and rumour had it that a favourable answer was being prepared by his council. Ambrose had employed his abilities and endangered his liberty to defend the succession of Valentinian, even against Maximus who was a Catholic and would rule as one. He had defended the weak against the strong and had believed it to be his duty as a Christian bishop. The people whom he had laboured to defend were now, for a time at least, secure in authority, and they were going to use it to restore the official approval of Pagan traditions. He discovered, too, that his influence had ceased with the death of Gratian. Justina had used his services when she needed them, but his counsel was not sought. He was not shown the petition of Symmachus,[2] and the decision was to be reached without consulting him. But he knew enough of Symmachus—they were almost friends as they were certainly acquaintances —to know the lines of his argument. Rumour, too, probably told him much about the appeal. He decided to address the emperor against the restoration of the altar.

[1] M.P.L., XVI cc. 966-971.
[2] Ep. Amb., XVII, 12.

It would be foolish to seek in Ambrose's first letter to Valentinian on this subject any complete theory of the duties of a Christian emperor. He was seeking to obtain a decision, not to inculcate principles. His arguments, however—like those of Symmachus—were based on his honest opinions, and from these he went forward in later years to construct a theory of the relations of Church and State. He urged his right to be heard: it was a matter of religion and as a bishop he had the right to speak; a civil cause was not decided unless both parties were given audience; the emperor could not decide a dispute touching religion unless the authorities of the Christian religion were given an opportunity to state their case, were shown the accusations made against their faith, were given the opportunities to answer.

He urged the emperor to consider what the practical issue was, rather than to dwell on theoretical considerations. Symmachus might plead the principles of religion as an adjunct of Roman administration, but in fact he was asking that the emperor should begin his reign by granting privileges to Pagan worship. It was not as though the emperor was asked not to abolish a Pagan custom. That had already been done. He was asked now to decree that a Pagan altar should be erected in the senate, that the State should take active steps in favour of a Pagan minority. Nor could it be said that by refusing this appeal the

emperor would force the consciences of upright men. It was honourable of them to retain their beliefs and worship, but they were not forced to worship one in whom they had no faith. Rather they were now asking the emperor to honour a religion in which he did not believe. There was no justification for the plea of equity, for the suggestion of persecution. Had the Pagans protested when Julian tried to make Christian worship impossible, Christian preaching difficult? Could they justly complain if Valentinian accorded them no special privileges, no place of official honour? Symmachus had pleaded that a common, a Roman symbol of religion was necessary, by which men might take their oaths, and that such an appeal implied no belief in the divinity of the Pagan gods. Of what value then, asked Ambrose, was an oath if it was not an appeal to God to witness to the truth of a statement, if it did not imply a belief that the deity invoked could punish perjury?[1]

The appeal of Symmachus would, Ambrose knew, be made to the tradition of the Romans, to the examples of the great emperors. He must invoke a higher authority, for to Ambrose as to all Romans the examples of famous men constituted a mighty argument. But as a bishop he invoked the name of God. The religion of the State which Symmachus represented was an adjunct of politics,

[1] Ep. Amb., XVII.

a convenience or even a necessity of government. It was a provision for loyalty, an appeal to moral force, but it was subordinate to the ends of government to which it remained a means. The Christian Church taught that religion was greater than this: it was the greatest gift of God, far surpassing the natural virtue of secular government, and so its worship and its claims could not be judged merely by their value to the good order of society. There is nothing, he reminded Valentinian, greater than religion, there is nothing more sublime than the knowledge of God; no consideration of worldly utility, not even the highest, that of social welfare, should be allowed to decide the religion of the State.

He passed from these considerations direct to the personal question for the emperor. All Romans realized the emperor as the embodiment of their polity; he was personally responsible for the government of the State as his authority therein was absolute. But the Christian Church would not, Ambrose reminded Valentinian, distinguish between his acts as sovereign and his personal character. If he restored Pagan worship he was a Pagan, and the Christian Church would not admit him to her altar. If he wished to be a Christian, if he believed that the Catholic Church gave him salvation, he must be the servant of Jesus Christ; he must in all his actions, official as well as personal, abjure the worship of Pagan

gods. Ambrose set the emperor and, as the Roman world was formed, the Empire at the parting of the ways. In the years of persecution, Christians had died for their right to acknowledge only the God of the Christian revelation, to obey the unique revelation of Jesus Christ. Ambrose proclaimed the doctrine that not even a ruler could belong to the Christian Church unless he rendered the same obedience; not even reasons of state could permit a Christian emperor to join in another worship.

It may have been the force of Ambrose's arguments, it may have been the value which Valentinian and his mother placed on their communion with the Christian Church and their knowledge that Ambrose, bishop of the city in which they had established their court, would keep his word, it may have been fear of offending the Christians amongst whom Ambrose already had a commanding position: whatever the motive the petition of Symmachus was refused and Ambrose was triumphant. He was shown the petition and he published a formal reply. Much of this was merely an *ad hominem* answer to Symmachus. The latter said that Rome had owed her safety to the direct intervention of the heathen gods. Yet in the history of Rome this safety was often seen to be the work of chance. Had not the cry of a goose once roused the sentinels and saved the city; had Jupiter spoken through the goose?

Symmachus had appealed to the examples of the great emperors who had been loyal to the Pagan gods. But Nero, a name of execration to Romans, had also worshipped these gods. Symmachus had dwelt on the injustice of not restoring to the Vestal virgins their endowments. Was then, Ambrose asked, the Pagan religion so dependent on worldly goods that only the enjoyment of vast endowments could persuade six or seven maidens at most to consecrate themselves to virginity? The Christian Church made no such provision, yet her virgins were numbered in hundreds, and had again and again accepted death rather than violate their vows. The goods of Christians had been forfeited again and again; did the Pagan aristocracy complain because the State confiscated the endowments of a religion which now claimed but a minority of adherents? In any case the question as it was now set forth was not one of revenues but of religion: the Church's title to its wealth was that this wealth was used to support the widow, the orphan, the poor; could Symmachus claim such a title for his endowments? The Christians were willing rather to lose their lands than to deny their faith: they had grown under persecution, in poverty and need; was Symmachus afraid for his creed unless it was maintained by money and State favours?[1]

Only in one point did Ambrose carry further

[1] Ep. Amb., XVIII.

his plea that the public worship of the Empire should be Christian. Symmachus had argued that, since all men worshipped God but did not reach Him by the same road, the emperor should encourage all creeds even though he was himself a Christian. The official religion should be a common agreement that the worship of God was necessary to the Roman citizen. It was the natural argument of a cultured, self-reliant, governing aristocracy. It was the assumption that religion was necessary to a people, and that any religion which did not teach immorality was equally useful. It looked only to satisfy the conscious needs of men, the well-being of government. It sought no special blessings from God but desired a higher sanction for morality than force, an outlet for the spiritual cravings of mankind. If all were agreed on this, a common basis between Christianity and a monotheistic Paganism could be found in the Unknowability of God. Ambrose replied that the essence of the Christian religion was that it was supernatural, that it was a revelation from God. It was not discovered by man to satisfy his needs, but was a gift from on high. It did not merely supply a sanction of morality nor a justification of that rule of passionless reason, which the philosophers of the Roman State urged as the justification of secular government. It claimed to give a knowledge of God as the highest of all gifts which man could

obtain; it claimed to give in return for faith benefits out of all proportion to man's efforts. Symmachus had to ask the emperors to grant peace to his gods; the Christian Church, enjoying a knowledge of God, could ask from Jesus Christ the blessing of peace on a Christian emperor. Such a religion and that of Symmachus shared no common basis.[1] An emperor who ignored the revelation of Jesus Christ could not expect to receive His blessing.

Ambrose had won a victory for Christianity as the public worship of civilization. It had been an easy victory needing only that he should risk offending the imperial government. The dwindling numbers of Paganism, the loyalty of the Christians made it easy; indeed Augustine, thinking of these last struggles, said that Paganism did but seek to die an honourable death. But there was another and more difficult warfare whose issue was then still uncertain. If Christianity was to become the religion of the Empire, was the Catholic Church to remain a complete society, self-governing in matters of faith, able to exclude those members who did not accept its authoritative canon and creeds, able to deny to the secular Christian government the right to modify its belief and worship and yet remain Christian? The question had already been formulated in the matter of Arianism, for the adherents

[1] Ep. Amb., XVIII, 8.

of that modification of Christian belief had become grouped around the secular government, and had used the authority of the latter against the authority of the bishop of Rome and the appeal to the traditions of the Catholic Church. It was viewed at the moment, at least by the Arians, as a matter of rival groups of Christian bishops, and Justina, who governed her son, had long been favourable to the Arian group.

The first serious engagement took place during Holy Week of the year 385 A.D. There were attached to the court many functionaries, lay and ecclesiastical, who were Arians, and some of the Gothic auxiliaries who constituted the emperor's bodyguard were said to belong to the same creed. Indeed the imperial government, now resident in Milan, formed as it were a separate city. They demanded therefore from Ambrose the use of one of the basilicas for their worship. At one time they asked him for the comparatively new cathedral within the walls, but they showed themselves always ready to moderate their demand to the ancient church outside the walls—perhaps S. Lawrence's. Throughout Holy Week the bishop was constantly employed in the ritual of the Church. There were ceremonies in the baptistery, in Milan as elsewhere a building separate from the cathedral. There were the long offices of the Passion on many days of the week. There was the reception of catechumens which

continued through many services till Holy Saturday. On Palm Sunday, while Ambrose was in the baptistery hearing the solemn profession of the creed by those who sought baptism, he was told that the imperial officers had taken official possession of the ancient church. He returned to his cathedral and began the Mass proper from which the catechumens were excluded. During its course a messenger announced that some Catholics had seized an Arian priest in the streets. Ambrose sent some of his attendant deacons to rescue the man, and himself prayed to God that blood might not be shed. Throughout that day and the next he refused all the imperial demands. The messengers urged that all property was, in the last resort, at the disposition of the State. Ambrose denied that the instruments of Christian worship were subject to the secular power. The people of Milan, rich and poor, stood by their bishop. Arrests were frequent in the next few days because the government feared a tumult. It had been customary in Holy Week to release prisoners: this year, as Ambrose sadly recorded, the prisons were filled with the merchants of the city and fines were imposed rather than pardons granted. On Holy Thursday again the bishop celebrated Mass in his cathedral and preached. But it was in curious circumstances. Soldiers had been sent and the church was filled. The people feared a massacre, but the soldiers

assured them that they had come to pray, and the Mass proceeded. After the sermon the imperial notaries repeated the command to surrender the church. Again Ambrose refused and again it was urged that the emperor had the right to a church. He has no right, said Ambrose, to adulterine worship. They suggested that he, Ambrose, was responsible for the attitude of the people, that he had encouraged them to resist the imperial commands. It was true indeed that the people only needed a leader and even the soldiers were not unfriendly. But Ambrose refused: he would not lead a revolt, though he would not surrender the basilica. Ambrose spent the night in the church, for the streets were filled with troops. The government must have discovered the attitude of the soldiery, for on Good Friday the orders were cancelled, the citizens released from prison, the soldiers withdrawn.[1]

Ambrose, however, knew and said that the danger was not past.[2] His forecast was correct. The following January an imperial edict proclaimed that all who professed the faith as defined by the council of Rimini had liberty of worship, and that whoever resisted this decree was guilty of treason. Liberty of worship, it need scarcely be added, was not the mere right to assemble, but the right to use the buildings set apart for purposes of

[1] Ep. Amb., XX.
[2] Ep. Amb., XX, 28.

religion. It was a skilful move, for at Rimini the definitions had ignored rather than contradicted the decisions of Nicæa. Yet the Catholic bishops had refused to accept the formula of Rimini and had condemned those who subscribed to it. If Ambrose remained faithful to the communion of the Roman bishop, he would technically forfeit the legal right to worship. Justina, too, had brought to Milan an Arian bishop who took the name of Auxentius, Ambrose's popular but Arian predecessor, and it was this intruder who had drafted the decree.[1] It might be hoped therefore that a part of the populace would support him. If Ambrose denied to them the use of a basilica for worship, he would be contravening the decree and would incur legally the penalty of death.

The decree was followed by another demand for the old church. Again Ambrose refused, and he was then ordered to go into exile. He refused to go voluntarily, but protested that he would obey if the imperial command was executed with a show of force. All this time he went about the city openly, but no effort was made to interfere with his liberty. The populace were still enthusiastic for him, and the government apparently feared the consequences of drastic action. Ambrose, however, was too much of a Roman to put his trust in popular clamour, and he expected exile as the natural result of his courage. The examples

[1] M.P.L., XVI c. 1012.

of Athanasius and Hilary were too recent to allow him to hope that the government could not enforce its will.[1]

So matters dragged on till the next Holy Week came round. It may have been that Justina wished her sect to have the means to celebrate the Paschal Solemnities. At any rate, she chose this season to try to force Ambrose to submit. Auxentius formally submitted his claim to the arbitration of an imperial tribunal. The emperor was persuaded to ask Ambrose to do the same. The letter was apparently delivered to Ambrose whilst he pontificated in the basilica of S. Lawrence. The Christian bishop, enthroned as teacher of the faithful, was summoned to submit his title to possession to the judgment of the State. Ambrose returned an absolute denial, and he appealed not only to the laws of the Empire, which already gave to the bishops the right of judging in all matters of faith, but to an absolute right—the *ius sacerdotale*[2] as he called it—conferred, he claimed, by the fact of Christ's commission, and in virtue of which all Christians must allow that bishops, the teachers of the faithful, can submit only to the judgment of bishops.[3] On his refusal, soldiers and lictors were sent to the old basilica to take possession. But Ambrose was already there and the populace

[1] M.P.L., XVI c. 1008.
[2] Ep. Amb., XXI, 4.
[3] Ep. Amb., XXI, 4.

assembled to defend their bishop, so that the officers did not dare to carry out their instructions. For the rest of the week the church was in a state of siege. Night and day the faithful remained with their pastor and, though some must have rested in the various adjoining buildings, Ambrose and his flock spent most of the time in the basilica. The liturgy of Holy Week is lengthy and Ambrose preached daily on the lessons of each day. Even so, they had many unoccupied hours, so he taught his people the antiphonal singing which the Greeks had already introduced, and the secular rulers heard Christian hymns being intoned throughout the night. Ambrose himself urged the people to go home. Their vigilance, he said, could do no good; if the will of Christ was that he should be exiled, or even put to death, they must suffer it to be so. He was ready to endure according to Christ's will, and they must remain spectators.[1] To a remark that he was relying on the strength of the people, he replied that his defence lay in the prayers of the poor and not in their strength. He did not, however, treat the contest as a matter personal to himself. He expounded the cause and taught with authority that the temples of Christ did not belong to Cæsar's jurisdiction. If the emperor desired the Church lands or revenues and took them, there would be no resistance; the bishop could not give them up,

[1] M.P.L., XVI cc. 1008, 1011.

but he could not deny the emperor's right. But the churches set apart for the worship of God were in a different category. The bishop was bound to see that the worship of Christians was carried out according to the standards of the Church, the commands of Christ. To secure this he must use his spiritual authority even at the risk of his life.[1]

Suddenly the government surrendered. Whether it was because Maximus and Theodosius were known to be the fervent supporters of the Catholics, or whether it was because the populace were so strongly in favour of Ambrose is not certain. Perhaps both factors contributed to the decision of Justina. Easter, however, found the Catholic bishop of Milan in undisputed authority over all Christian worship in the city.

So Ambrose gained his second victory. Hitherto Catholic bishops had gone into exile rather than surrender or modify their faith at the bidding of the secular power. Ambrose had forced from the government an unwilling admission of his claim that the authority of a Catholic bishop extended over all Christians and over all Christian worship. His appeal had not been that the Arians denied the creed of Nicæa, but that they were alien from the Catholic communion; the Church and the Church alone could decide its terms of communion, and the test for Ambrose now as at Aquileia was

[1] M.P.L., XVI cc, 1012-1017.

the communion of the bishop of Rome. He would not admit any lay authority, not even the Christian emperor, to decide what was and what was not legitimate Christian worship. The Church was self-sufficient in matters of faith, and decided with authority the right of visible membership.

The surrender of the court had not been one of conviction. Political events, however, prevented them from renewing their effort to impose an Arian schism in Milan. Maximus was already threatening to march into Italy and seize its government. Whatever Justina and Valentinian may have thought of Ambrose as a bishop, they had no doubt of his loyalty as a citizen. They asked him, therefore, again to undertake an embassy to Maximus. It says much for the greatness of the man that he accepted the mission without hesitation. His high concept of episcopal office did not include exemption from the duties of a Roman to his emperor. Another feature, too, of the ideal for which he strove is brought out in his relations with Maximus. The latter had thought to please the bishops, and had perhaps fulfilled his own concept of the duty of a Catholic emperor, by putting to death some heretics. In Spain a doctrine, which seems to have started with Puritanism and ended in something like Manichæism, had obtained a hold on many Christians. The assembled bishops of Gaul condemned it, and they fully approved the cruelty of Maximus. Of them

all only Martin, the bishop of Tours, already acclaimed as a saint, condemned such a course and refused to remain in communion with the bishops who approved. Ambrose had already given his support to Martin, and probably all the Catholic bishops in Italy were with him. When Ambrose arrived at the court of Maximus he found the emperor surrounded by the bishops who had at least acquiesced in the death sentence. He promptly refused to communicate with them in Christian worship despite the commands of Maximus.[1] In this and in other ways he asserted his rights as a Christian bishop, and it is not surprising that Maximus treated him practically as a prisoner. Whether other methods would have availed to turn that ruler from his purposed invasions of Italy is very doubtful. Ambrose was sent away and shortly afterwards Maximus, possibly by treachery, appeared in Italy at the head of his army. In the autumn of the year 387 Valentinian had fled to Theodosius, and Maximus was ruler of the Western Empire. Such changes were accepted peacefully enough by the citizens. The political concepts of the Roman world found little place for strictly personal loyalty. Provided that the system of justice and order was maintained, a usurper, especially if, like Maximus, he was already one of the emperors, was accorded obedience. Ambrose avoided, as far as he could, all recognition of the

[1] Ep. Amb., XXIV, 12.

usurper, but he did not attempt to organize resistance, nor would he have refused his respect had Maximus been left in peace. Theodosius, however, after a period of wavering, decided to restore Valentinian. A short campaign ended in the defeat and execution of the usurper, and in the autumn of the year 388 Valentinian was again restored to power, but was henceforth under the practical tutelage of Theodosius. Whether it had been a condition of the restoration, or was merely the result of the influence of Theodosius, or of the death of Justina, Valentinian made no further efforts to restore the Arian bishops; henceforth he was in matters of faith the pupil of Ambrose.

V

The great bishop had rejoiced over the victory of Theodosius. He saw it as a divine intervention in favour of his church, the end of the efforts to restore Paganism or create schism. Theodosius indeed, never attempted either the one or the other; he was, a contemporary said, the man of bishops and monks. Had Ambrose been a theorist he would have attempted to obtain some explicit admission of the position of the Church from the emperor. Already his meditations on the Scripture, on the life of King David, had led

him to such a consideration. David was, he had said, above human laws: such was the conception of the Romans, for the emperor alone could put the imperial laws into operation. But David, like all rulers, must be bound by the laws of God. Ambrose, however, did not speculate on the extent to which the Church as guardian of the divine law could enter the field of politics. He left it, working bishop as he was, till circumstances forced him to take action.

In the year 389 the Christian population of a little town in Mesopotamia had destroyed the synagogue of the Jews, and some monks had burnt the meeting-house of some heretics. Without hesitation the local magistrate had ordered the bishop, as ruler of Christians, to rebuild the synagogue and the meeting-house out of Church property, and Theodosius approved the action of his magistrate. Ambrose, who foresaw that the other bishops would look to him for guidance, immediately appealed to the emperor to rescind the order; he urged that in the past, the recent past, Jews had destroyed the Christian churches but no redress had been granted or even sought; he urged that no inquiry had been made as to whether the bishop was in any way responsible; he urged that no Christian could order the Church to build synagogues, for such an action bordered on sacrilege; he urged that if the bishop was personally guilty, he should be judged by his

fellow-bishops.[1] Theodosius paid no heed to this letter. Shortly afterwards, being in Milan, he attended the Divine Liturgy in the cathedral and the bishop preached. Ambrose addressed his sermon directly to the emperor, and taught plainly that Christ would not bless his rule unless the emperor protected the Church of Christ. The ritual of the Mass required that the bishop should then return to the altar and bless the offertory, the symbolic gifts made by the faithful as their contributions to the Church's sacrifice. Amongst these would be the emperor's. On his way to the altar Ambrose was met by Theodosius, who asked why the sermon was addressed to him and what the bishop required. "Make it possible for me," said Ambrose, "to offer your gift to God." He would not continue the Liturgy till Theodosius had given his word to rescind the order for the rebuilding of the synagogue by the bishop.[2]

Another conflict arose in the following year. The inhabitants of Thessalonica had rioted and killed the prefect of the city, a personal friend of the emperor's. Theodosius immediately commanded a massacre of the inhabitants, and this savage vindication of order was carried out by Roman soldiers. As it happened Ambrose was presiding at a synod when the news arrived, and his fellow-bishops, knowing his

[1] Ep. Amb., XL.
[2] Ep. Amb., XLI, 27.

friendship for Theodosius, were half inclined to think that he must have known beforehand of the intended slaughter.[1] In any case they urged him to cut Theodosius off from his communion. Such an action had never been taken before. The whole tradition of the Empire denied a higher civil authority than the emperor. The Church had hitherto been content to assert its own right to self-government. Even when Valentinian the elder had repudiated his wife and married another no Christian bishop had pronounced authoritative sentence. Ambrose, however, did not hesitate. First he wrote privately to the emperor, relating the news which was current, assuring him of his friendship, but assuring him also that the massacre was an offence against God.[2] He did not assume, as some would have done, that Theodosius was an outcast, or that murderous passion need brand a man for life. "You are but a man," he wrote; "temptation has overcome you but you must conquer it. Your sin will not be removed but by tears and penance." So he would pray God for the emperor's pardon, but till the penitence was publicly proclaimed he would not offer the Christian sacrifice in the presence of the emperor.

An historian of the next century made a pretty story out of the succeeding events. He told how Theodosius attempted to enter the church but was

[1] Ep. Amb., LI, 6.
[2] *Ibid.*, 11.

repulsed by the bishop; how the imperial councillors tried to bend the bishop's will to cancel the humiliating ceremony; how at last Theodosius, being denied the Christian sacraments, submitted publicly to the sentence of the bishop, acknowledged his fault and was received to communion. Theodoret, who wrote the story, usually founded his narrative on facts, but was given (it is a perennial custom with chroniclers) to dramatizing the events. All that is certain is that Theodosius' penitence was publicly known, and that after it he was received to communion in the same way as any other penitent.[1]

Most subsequent writers have praised Ambrose's action in the second but condemned it in the earlier incident. Such considerations need not detain us. Both were cases for immediate and practical judgment and, if Ambrose or Theodosius erred, it was a fault into which most men responsible for administering order have fallen at some time or another. But the two cases were of supreme importance to the development of Europe. They established a precedent for Christian bishops, and a precedent hallowed by a venerable name. The Roman concept of the State set the emperor above the laws he administered, and that concept passed into the Europe which was to develop during the next six hundred years: it is with us still, for the legis-

[1] Augustine *de Civitate Dei*, V, 26; M.P.L., XVI, 1396.

lative body can alter or repeal a law however ancient; it is at the basis of the concept of sovereignty. But Ambrose began a different tradition. He claimed not only that there was a law of God to which human laws should be amenable—Pagan philosophers had at least groped after this doctrine—but that the Church of God, guardian of the divine revelation, could pronounce sentence, at least in individual cases, when the divine law had been broken. He did not urge the people to revolt nor claim that he had a right to do so, but he did deny, as bishop, the means of the Christian life, the Christian worship, to rulers as well as to other men who had offended the Christian law and were impenitent. So long as the rulers of Europe valued the blessing of Christ and the means of grace of the Christian Church, the tradition of Ambrose was potent and it served to ameliorate the laws of many countries, and to ensure occasional acts of mercy and mildness even in a cruel age.

VI

It was natural to Ambrose, a Roman and an administrator by training, to seek to influence society through the action of government. The reign of Theodosius was in a sense the achieve-

ment—partial it is true, but only in so far as all such success must be partial—of this aim. Its extent and its weakness was shown by the incidents of the years 393-395. Valentinian II had been murdered by the orders of Arbogast, the military commander in Gaul. The latter appointed a philosopher Eugenius to succeed Valentinian, and marched into Italy. The Romans were as ready to accept this as the previous usurpations, and though Ambrose went into voluntary exile to avoid contact with the new emperor he did not—it was unthinkable to a Roman citizen—attempt to raise or lead armed resistance. But the concurrence of Theodosius was necessary for the peace of Eugenius, and Theodosius refused to acknowledge the new order in the West. Arbogast and Eugenius, looking for loyalty and support against Theodosius, were forced to identify themselves more and more with Paganism. When the two armies eventually met, that of Arbogast marched under the protection of Hercules, and with the announced intention of returning victorious to destroy Christianity by force. It was still possible then for an accepted government, supported by a strong army, to declare in favour of Paganism. At the same time it was clear that radical opposition to Theodosius must be an attack on the Christian religion. The Empire which, under Constantine, had accepted and protected the Catholic Church was now

specifically Christian. Theodosius treated his expedition as the defence of the Cross and attributed his overwhelming victory to the protection of Christ. So also Ambrose viewed it, but the two years of suspense, and the possibility of persecution, must have made him realize how incomplete was still the hold of the Christian religion on the lives of the Roman citizens.

Ambrose had returned to his city a month before the combat, trusting the event to God and determined, as he said, not to abandon his church if persecution must ensue. He wrote of the victory of Theodosius as a signal blessing given by God to the Roman State and urged Theodosius to render thanks by clemency to his prisoners.[1] So Ambrose envisaged a Christian Empire, wherein the ruling powers sought for the divine assistance both in government and defence, and merited it by acts of mercy. Four months later Theodosius died and Ambrose, in preaching at the funeral, came as near to defining his doctrine of a Christian ruler as such a man of action could do. He did not expect him to be without fault but, after a public crime, to repent publicly.[2] He did not expect him always to succeed but always to seek for the help of God. He did not expect him to abandon his authority or even the solemn pomp which earthly rule gave him, but

[1] M.P.L., XVI cc. 1186-1188.
[2] *Ibid.* c. 1394.

to accept it as the investiture of Christ. Helena, he said, had caused one of Christ's nails to be fixed in the diadem of her son Constantine; Theodosius had made that emblem of Christ the very nail which bound his State together. The veneration paid to the emperor was now the loyalty which Christians gave to their religion.[1] This doctrine of a Christian Empire must be completed by remembering Ambrose's phrase and doctrine of the *ius sacerdotale* which he had upheld against Valentinian and Justina. The State which publicly proclaimed and practised Christianity had no authority over the Catholic religion. The bishops were the divinely constituted custodians of the faith, and were bound to criticize the administration in the name of the Christian law.

It was an ideal difficult to achieve as all good government is difficult. And Ambrose himself left for all time a model for bishops in a Christian State. He was friendly with the secular rulers, unwearied in supporting their authority, but ready at all times to risk their displeasure and worse, determined to maintain the detached and critical standpoint of religious authority, to preserve the independence of the custody of the faith. He refused to seek civil power, and insisted on all occasions that the work of a bishop was not merely that of administrator or

[1] M.P.L., XVI cc. 1402-1403.

even of political critic. The best priest, he maintained, was the spiritual man and his best training was in the revelation of God. Never once did he fail to use the training that the Roman culture had given him; never once did he consider it the best preparation for the episcopate. I know, he wrote in one of his meditations, that I am not worthy to be called a bishop because I was given up to worldly affairs.[1] We think of him now as the counsellor and outspoken critic of rulers, the man whose acquaintance Arbogast was proud to claim, at whose table were to be found governors and prefects. But the man knew himself as the constant student of the Sacred Scriptures, the man of prayer and meditation, the teacher of Christian doctrine, the restorer of clerical discipline. Throughout all his conflicts his writings and sermons and prayers increased, and in them all he never ceased to inculcate the practice of those Christian virtues and habits besides which the fortunes of Empire seemed trivial. It was by this means chiefly that he hoped to forge the Christian State. He was the tutor of one emperor, and he taught his pupil to meditate on the Incarnation of the Word of God and the divinity of the Holy Spirit; he was the counsellor of another, and he set before him the Christian practices of penance and absolution.

As a Roman Ambrose thought naturally in terms

[1] M.P.L., XVI c. 515.

of government, but, even when most involved in matters of State, he never forgot the excellence of virginity. In his later years can be traced perhaps a little more emphasis on the virtue of voluntary poverty. Perhaps he saw the dangers of that development whereby the bishops were becoming administrators of vast domains, and so he insisted that the true patrimony of the Church was the support of beggars; that the work of the pastor lay in the redemption of captives, the help of the unfortunate.[1] He gave a practical example of his teaching. A neighbouring bishop left his personal property to the Church he had governed, and the will was contested by his brother and sister. The case was referred to Ambrose and, to the surprise of his neighbours, he decided against the ecclesiastical interests, saying that the Church could not lose if charity were served and family peace restored. Such a man came with clean hands to criticize the wealth of the Roman Empire. He bade his fellow-citizens remember that oppression and greed were sins, and would be visited by the wrath of God. He urged them to the practice of the Christian virtue of alms-giving, and so he prepared the way for that tradition of the Middle Ages which made the State relief of the poor unnecessary.

But above all he had given the Church a tradition, which it was never to lose, in his

[1] *De Officiis*, II, 28.

attitude to Christian rulers of the State. Henceforth the bishops of Christendom knew that they must, if necessary, oppose the secular ruler in the name of the law of God, that they had the right to insist that princes no less than citizens were subject to the Catholic Church in matters of morality and faith. It had been Ambrose's life-work to teach that doctrine, and it was his example which inspired the churchmen of later days. But he had hoped to see the Roman Empire become thoroughly Christian, and in this his hope was disappointed. His labours were of no avail, for the organization of the Empire was to break down in the West scarcely a generation after his death. The civilization which continued was indeed to bear the impress of his doctrine, but this he could not have known. It may be he did not even guess at the coming breakdown of imperial organization, but in his last years he certainly grew weary of the burden of political influence. There are two treatises of his which date from his later years and their titles are *de fuga sæculi* and *de bono mortis*. The burden of the former is, "When shall I come and appear before thee, O Lord?" and of the latter, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." In these sentiments he died on December 7th, 397 A.D.

NOTE

The chief sources for the life of S. Ambrose are his letters and the few personal notices to be found in his works. The Life of him by his notary, Paulinus, was written several years after his death for S. Augustine, who already knew the main outlines and the chronological sequence of events; it omits therefore the things we should most like to know.

Of recent accounts I found those of the *Dictionnaire d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* and the *Catholic Encyclopædia* the most useful; for an analysis of his doctrine of the relations of Church and State, Mgr. Batiffol's *Le Siège Apostolique* and Dr. Carlyle's *Mediæval Political Theory in the West*, Vol. I.

There are several questions of chronology connected with S. Ambrose for the solution of which there is not sufficient evidence. Some historians, for instance, maintain that the second journey to the court of Maximus took place in 385 A.D. and not in 386 or 387 A.D. This view was defended by M. Babut and has been accepted by many others. The description which Ambrose

gave[1] can be explained on either hypothesis. If, however, the embassy, which was unsuccessful, took place in 385 A.D. we must conclude, as M. Babut has pointed out,[2] that in 386 S. Ambrose was in disgrace at the court of Valentinian, and that the attempt on the basilica in that year was part of a general attack on him. But, in the account which Ambrose gave of that attempt, I can find no suggestion that Justina was actuated by motives of personal animosity. A more serious objection to the theory is this. After Ambrose's failure Valentinian and his mother made another attempt to secure the favour of Maximus; they would not therefore have been likely to attempt the restoration of Arianism *after* Ambrose's failure, for Maximus put himself forward as the champion of orthodoxy. For these reasons then, I have held to the traditional view that Ambrose's second embassy to Maximus took place after the second attempt on the basilica.

There seems to be a general agreement that the sermon against Auxentius belongs to the second attempt to gain the basilica. I have followed this sequence, although it seems to me that Letter 20 refers not merely to a series of claims which led up to the incident it describes, but to some earlier and separate attempt.[3] If this be so the

[1] Ep. Amb., XXIV.
[2] Babut, *S. Martin*, p. 160 n.
[3] Ep. Amb., XX, 1, 2.

incident to which Auxentius belongs was the earlier, and that described in Letter 20 the later event. But since the evidence is so slight I have preferred to follow the general opinion.

I have suggested that the basilica portiana was what is now the Church of S. Lawrence. All we know is that it was outside the ancient walls and that the sermon against Auxentius and others during the same Holy Week was preached in it. M. Paul Lejay in the *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne* has suggested that it had been used by the Catholics during the episcopate of Auxentius. The Church of S. Lawrence is outside the walls and is very ancient. There are two references to S. Lawrence in the writings of S. Ambrose, and in them he dwells on the two themes which were most applicable to the period of the attempt on the basilica portiana.[1] Further, S. Ambrose seems to have been the first to preach on these aspects of the career of the martyr. If, as seems probable, these two references were given originally in sermons, the most likely time and place would be during the Holy Week in the basilica portiana, and the later dedication might well have arisen from such a fact.

[1] *De Officiis*, I, 41, and II, 28.

S. MARTIN

I

THROUGHOUT the ninth century the coasts of Gaul were ravaged by pirates from the north. In the middle of the century they penetrated by the river Loire into the very heart of the country. Tours was then a small, defenceless city, but it contained a great treasure, and its clergy carried their most precious relic from town to town to ensure its safety. Again and again it returned to Tours only to flee before another raid. It was not the gold and silver of the great shrine which was saved, but the body which rested there—the corpse of S. Martin. For more than thirty years it was carried from one citadel to another; only in the year 855 A.D.[1] did it return for a century to its shrine, and the Church of Tours celebrated the return by adding an annual feast to its calendar.

The fame of S. Martin had already been world-wide for some three centuries. Pilgrimages to his tomb were frequent already, when Gregory

[1] B.E.C., 1869, p. 191.

was bishop of the city in the middle of the sixth century. Fortunatus, the poet of that age, sung his fame: altars, he said, in Martin's honour were to be found wherever Christ was worshipped. Already men were saying that Clovis, the first Christian king of the Franks, had paid a visit to the tomb before his baptism in the year 500 A.D., and had obtained through Martin the grace to become a Christian. Certainly he showed great respect for the shrine in later years, and his widow spent the last years of her life under its shadow. Men said that this devotion was due to the great miracles which were wrought at the shrine, and the belief shows at least the veneration in which the man had been held.

Yet there remains not one word which was dictated or written by Martin of Tours. Gregory, his successor in the bishopric a century and a half after Martin's death, wrote of his miracles and of his life partly from inscriptions in the churches of the city, but chiefly from the biography of Sulpitius Severus. Paulinus of Périgueux in the fifth century, some two generations after Martin's death, relied largely on that earlier biography of Sulpitius Severus, but he had an independent source of information through Perpetuus, the contemporary bishop of Tours.[1] If these independent sources were not there, it would seem that the whole legend of S. Martin were created by his

[1] Paulinus, *De Vita Martini*, VI.

disciple and friend Sulpitius. They do not, it is true, add much to our knowledge of the man, but they do show that the memory of him was not due merely to his biographer. Sulpitius, moreover, was not a man of straw. Famous as a great lawyer, wealthy by marriage, moving in the highest circles of Roman society, he turned to a life of prayer. It was then for the first time that he visited Martin, the bishop of Tours, who was already an acquaintance of his friend Paulinus of Nola. Sulpitius undertook the journey with a view to collecting information for a future biography of the bishop.[1] He received not only information but advice. And the advice was this: that like Paulinus he should bestow all his wealth on the poor and so imitate Christ. It took two years to bring Sulpitius to the decision—it was after Martin's death and after the life was published—but he attributed that decision to the persuasion of Martin.

Nor is there wanting another indication that Sulpitius had means of knowing the truth, and that, generally speaking, he was accurate. His friend Paulinus of Nola, a Roman senator, a former consul, a millionaire who owned a port and a market of his own, whose estates were to be found in Italy, France and Spain, had renounced this vast wealth in the year 393 A.D., and had distributed most of it to comparatively poor men,

[1] V.M., XXV, 1.

despite the appeals and recriminations of his own family. He was already an admirer of Martin, though there is no reason to suppose that the latter directly persuaded him to this act of charity. But when Sulpitius brought out the biography, he stated that Martin had cured Paulinus of some kind of incipient blindness, and Paulinus, by his own account,[1] caused the biography to be known and read in Rome and in other places of the Empire. He attested by that act the reliability of the account of Sulpitius.

The memory of Martin, as perpetuated by Sulpitius Severus and as embodied in the institutions of Europe, is first and foremost that of a monk. In the years of his episcopate at Tours, which covered the last quarter of the fourth century, he founded the great monastery of Marmoutiers. Here S. Patrick received his training and through him the Christianity of Ireland and so of S. Columba, of S. Aidan, and S. Cuthbert received its peculiar stamp. From this monastery came Brice, Martin's successor at Tours, Victor, bishop of Mans, and many another of the subsequent rulers of the churches of Gaul. It would be false to call him the founder of Western monasticism. Benedict's rule, which came to Gaul two centuries later, was of such vast importance that Benedict's title is for ever secure. But Martin and his disciples had already shown

[1] Ep., XXIX, 14.

how the monastic life could enable men to render high service to the Church and to civilization; the way was prepared for men to welcome those who had been trained in the discipline of the Benedictine rule, and the later fathers of monasticism, such as Odo of Cluny,[1] looked to S. Martin as an example, an inspiration and a patron.

It is difficult nowadays to grasp what this meant to Europe, and more difficult to see exactly how Martin affected the history of that development. Not even at Marmoutiers did he establish, so far as one can tell, a system, nor perhaps anything more than a temporary rule. But throughout his life and especially at Marmoutiers he was the incarnation of the spirit of monasticism, and his triumphs showed what that spirit could achieve. He was the son of a tribune of the imperial guard, was born in Pannonia by the Danube, and had been educated in the military schools of the imperial cavalry. Against his will he had been forced, such was the lot of soldiers' sons, to serve in the Roman army. Already a Christian catechumen he had been baptized whilst in that service, and had attempted to live there a life according to the evangelical counsels of perfection. He had treated his servant as an equal and had bestowed his pay in charity.[2] He had obtained his

[1] *Vita Odonis*, II, 22; M.P.L., CXXXIII.
[2] V.M., II.

dismissal from the service to put himself under the discipline of Hilary of Poitiers, the ardent champion of orthodoxy against Arians, the bold opponent of emperors.[1] Hilary made him an exorcist, one of the lowest orders in the clergy of the Church, and then he went to Italy and Illyria to convert his family and countrymen. He met with but slight success and was finally driven out of the city where he was preaching; returning to Milan he found the Church there governed by Auxentius, the leader of Western Arianism. Martin then lived the life of a hermit in or near that city till the bishop drove him out; thence he retired to one of the Balearic Islands in company with a priest, and there they lived in solitude.

Hilary meanwhile had been exiled in the East for four years, but on his return in the year 360 Martin rejoined his old master and went with his permission to live in solitude at Ligugé. There a few came to join him and others to be instructed by him. It was the foundation of the monastery of Ligugé. Ten years later the people of Tours, against the will of many of the neighbouring bishops, insisted that Martin should be consecrated to that see which was recently vacant. The episcopal opposition was probably due to the fact that Martin was still a monk and, as far as an ordinary intelligent man could see, such a life as his was no preparation for the important work

[1] V.M., V, 3.

of administrator and judge which a Christian bishop was bound to carry out.

Martin remained a monk despite his consecration. He attempted for a while to live as a solitary beside his cathedral and to delegate all formal business to his clergy.[1] When such a very impracticable system broke down he moved his retreat to Marmoutiers, a couple of miles outside the city. There for the rest of his life he had his headquarters. There he trained many of his own clergy; there he gathered as many as eighty monks, each living in his own separate cell but sharing a common table, living under Martin's general direction. From there Martin came into Tours for episcopal business, visited and preached all over his diocese, journeyed to councils; always he kept with him a few of his monks, always he preached the gospel, always he was clothed and fared as a monk, avoiding company, refusing gifts, seeking solitude and occupied in prayer.

During Martin's lifetime the establishment at Marmoutiers had little permanent structure, nor did it embark on any of those social labours for which monasticism subsequently became famous. The bishop lived in a little wooden hut, probably thatched, between a steep rock on the one side and the river Loire on the other.[2] A small plot in front of the hut, a wooden seat, formed the

[1] V.M., X, 2.
[2] V.M., X, 4.

episcopal domain. Probably it was merely a peasant hut such as could be found occupied by a slave on any great estate. Those who joined themselves to Martin lived in similar dwellings or in caverns cut in the side of the neighbouring hill. They met only for a common meal [1] and for common worship. Probably the church had some solidity but almost certainly it was of wood. The clothing, like the dwelling, was of the simplest but was not yet a habit, a uniform. It was in the case of Martin merely the rough garment such as a slave might wear. Coarse and cheap are the adjectives which Sulpitius Severus used to describe it. Others among the brethren clothed themselves with camels' hair, a custom introduced probably from the East, but in any case an imitation of the Baptist.[2]

Of those who were to be found in Martin's company some were young men, often the sons of wealthy parents who were sent there to be trained for the priesthood.[3] Others had come of their own mature choice to lead a life of prayer and mortification. Apparently there was no need for them, at least for the younger ones, to renounce their worldly possessions. Brice, a lad who had been brought up by Martin, was obviously possessed of considerable wealth, for

[1] V.M., X, 6, 7.
[2] V.M., X, 8.
[3] Dial., III, 15, 4.

as a young man he began to purchase horses and slaves. That this was against Martin's instruction (or rule if the word is used in a wide sense) is clear since Martin, an eye-witness said, rebuked him for it. The young man did not take the correction kindly; having worked himself into a passion he cursed the bishop to his face, pointing out that there was nothing wrong in what he had done. Nay, further, he claimed to be considerably better than Martin himself, for whereas Brice had been brought up in the contemplation of divine matters Martin had, as was well known, spent his youth in the licence of the military camps.[1] The bishop made no reply to the furious young prig, and it would seem that he did not demand the surrender of the purchases.

But though there is nothing to show that a monk had to give away his possessions, it is clear that Martin insisted on his making no personal use of them. The brethren had all to share the same food which included no flesh meat, and to refuse softer garments than those of a peasant. Even collectively they could not use the gifts which were offered them. Vincentius, a Roman magistrate, offered Martin a large sum of money; it was accepted and spent in paying the ransoms of prisoners and debtors. When the brethren urged that something might be spent on the table or for clothing they were told that the church

[1] Dial., III, 15.

would feed and clothe them provided they sought nothing for their own comfort.[1] Probably this abandonment of the use of riches while legal ownership was retained is the sense in which early monasticism should be understood. Martin certainly praised the higher virtue which sold everything and bestowed the proceeds on the poor, for to this step he later urged Sulpitius,[2] but he was probably content at Marmoutiers that men should renounce the enjoyment of their wealth.

The work of the brethren, apart from the common singing of the psalms, was divided into the copying of manuscripts, of the fathers and the scriptures, and prayer. The younger members of the community were given the former, the more experienced the latter task.[3] Indeed, throughout every reference to the monastic discipline which Martin instituted, it is clear that he regarded the life primarily as a preparation for a life of prayer. For that reason he wanted solitude, and so he built Marmoutiers in a place where there was only one steep road by which the visitor could arrive. So, too, he discouraged guests and especially the rich and powerful, to one of whom, a Roman magistrate and devout Christian, he deliberately gave a denial.[4] But at the same time he made no

[1] Dial., III, 14, 6.
[2] V.M., XXV, 4.
[3] V.M., X, 5.
[4] Dial., I, 25, 6.

virtue of solitude for its own sake. Part of the work and training of the brethren was to accompany their bishop during his diocesan journeys, in his pastoral work, when he preached to the people, when he celebrated the liturgy in his cathedral. The life of solitude was the training then for the Church's work of prayer and preaching. So, too, Martin viewed the question of celibacy imposed by the monastic life. A married man and his wife wished to devote themselves wholly to God and chose to do so by separating, he to join a group of anchorites formed on the Marmoutiers model, she to be consecrated as a widow. After a time the man thought that it would be possible for his wife to look after him without carnal intercourse, and asked Martin if this was permissible. The bishop's reply was to remind the monk that they had both been soldiers, and that on a field of battle there was no place for the wives who had been left in the fortified camp.[1] So, too, Martin argued, the life of prayer to which you have dedicated yourself is a battle and needs all your energies; there is no room for the comforts of married life.

This conception of the life of prayer was the foundation of Marmoutiers and was Martin's contribution to the formation of the clergy of the Church. All other rules which he made were

[1] Dial., II, 11.

subordinate to it and indeed were probably but temporary and local. In the course of his episcopate he founded monasteries, i.e., small groups of priests and laymen, to maintain Christian worship and teach the Christian faith. In some cases these monks, even in Martin's lifetime, laboured and traded for their temporal maintenance; in other cases they were probably the clergy attached to a church and living on its revenues. But always they were pledged to a life of prayer and for that reason to mortification.

Sulpitius Severus does not claim that the monastic foundations of Martin had a very marked effect in his own lifetime, although many subsequent writers, whether they accept or discredit Sulpitius, have hastily assumed that he makes such a statement. He said only that some bishops came from Marmoutiers, and on other grounds we know that Heros of Arles, Brice of Tours and probably Romain of Blaye did so. Clarus, another of the brethren, founded in Martin's lifetime a second monastery between Marmoutiers and Tours,[1] which establishment he later moved to Prémillac on the estates of Sulpitius Severus. Others of the brethren were sent to the churches of the diocese, but the biographer's rhetoric question, " What city would not wish to have a bishop from Marmoutiers? "[2] is scarcely a proof that they were

[1] V.M., XXIII, 1, 2.
[2] V.M., X, 9.

often to be found in pastoral office. Indeed, in the year 405 A.D. he wrote, also with some rhetoric, that the clergy of Gaul refused as a rule to recognize the merits of Martin,[1] and it is certain that after the execution of the Priscillianists in 385 A.D., Martin found himself in opposition to many of his fellow-bishops. Yet within a couple of generations the monastic ideal of Martin was imposed on the Christian clergy at least for a time. The leading bishops of Gaul, who in his time had been chiefly wealthy, and often upright administrators of the revenues of the Church, at best dispensers of justice and protectors of the poor, at worst sycophants of the court and parasites of the secular government, amongst whom Hilary of Poitiers had been a persecuted and ostracized man, were led in the latter half of the fifth and throughout the sixth century by men who aspired at least to the life which Martin taught, and who honoured him as their ideal. The attitude of Christianity is shown by the numbers of saintly bishops whom the writers of those later times claimed to have been trained at Marmoutiers. It is shown by the very fame of Marmoutiers, which gave Patrick to Ireland and so founded Irish and Scottish and much English Christianity. The knowledge of Martin and his fame would probably not have spread had Sulpitius Severus not written of him. The Life and the Dialogues which tell of the saint gained an almost

[1] Dial., I, 26, 2 and 3.

immediate fame. But, since they appeared within a few years of Martin's death, it is impossible to suppose that they would have created a devotion to the man, would have overcome the antagonism of the official Christianity of Gaul, and built up an acceptance of his ideals and teachings, unless they drew a picture which was verified by the knowledge of living men, unless the Martin of fact was at least as great as the Martin of the biographer. There is an alternative explanation: that the miracles wrought by Martin's intercession after his death were so stupendous as to create devotion to him. But it seems unnecessary to doubt the biography in order to have recurrence to such an explanation.

II

The number of monks trained by Martin never rose higher than eighty; Sulpitius mentions this as an astoundingly high figure for any such group in the West. Nor was the institution well known in Gaul before the time of Martin, though it spread rapidly during his lifetime since it was said that two thousand assembled for his funeral. During that lifetime therefore the honour which men gave to the monastic institution had to be earned or at least justified, and even the monks

themselves set forth Martin's life as the incarnation of their spirit, the prototype of the good monk. Yet that life was in fact lived in contact with the world, and the qualities Martin showed, the acts for which he was famous, were the foundations of the fame of the monastic institution. First perhaps men saw his amazing charity. His friends told a story of this even whilst he was a soldier. He was stationed at Amiens and had given all his pay to the beggars who crowded in the streets of the city. One day he found a poor man begging and had nothing wherewith to relieve him. Martin immediately took his own military coat and, cutting it in two with his sword, gave half to the beggar and made do for himself with the remaining portion.[1] This spectacular act of charity has impressed itself on the memory of Christendom, and the common sense of mankind has not gone astray in realizing that it introduced a new style in the art of almsgiving. Perhaps this is brought out better by another incident, the details of which Sulpitius did not guarantee, though it shows at least the reputation which Martin enjoyed. It took place after he had become bishop of Tours. In that office he sought to remain a monk, and for that reason delegated the temporal business of the see to the clergy of his curia. The chancellery of the cathedral was handed over to them, and Martin kept for himself only a small dark room

[1] V.M., III.

where he could pray and avoid the company of men. This arrangement must have put a great deal of responsibility and work on his clerics, and naturally enough they despised a bishop who neglected what most men of that time thought to be episcopal functions. One winter's day, on his way to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, he was asked by a beggar for clothes. Immediately, and apparently without inquiry, he ordered his archdeacon to supply the beggar's needs, and went on alone into his own room to occupy himself in prayer. The busy official promptly bade the beggar begone, and the latter, by accident or design, wandered into the bishop's room and complained of his treatment. Under cover of darkness Martin slipped off the coat which he was wearing under his cloak, gave it to the beggar, and sent him away. Shortly afterwards the archdeacon reported that everything was ready for Mass and prepared to accompany Martin to the altar. But the bishop, still clad in his cloak, refused to go on until his beggar had been clothed. The archdeacon could not find the beggar and said so. "Very well," replied Martin, "bring me the coat which you have bought for him. We shall find a poor man to clothe all right." The unfortunate and busy official, thoroughly annoyed by what seemed to him a stupid whim, slipped into a neighbouring shop, bought the cheapest and roughest coat he could, and coming back flung it at his bishop's

feet. "Here's the coat," he said, "but I tell you the beggar's not here." Martin turned his attendants out of the cell, slipped on the coat and the cloak again, and so proceeded to Mass.[1]

There was an element of rough humour in this act, but the really important feature of Martin's attitude to the poor, shown in both incidents, was the sacrifice of his personal comfort. Till the fourth century the Church had so often suffered persecution that its heroes were martyrs. After the peace of Constantine, there were the great heresies and the persecution of the bishops by the State; there was the luxury of the world to be overcome; theological warriors and exiles like Athanasius, hermits like Antony took the place of the martyrs. Already, however, there were some stupendous acts of charity: rich Roman ladies gave their fortune to the relief of the poor, bishops like Ambrose surrendered their patrimony on their election. But Martin introduced a new note when he took the coat off his own back to give it to the beggar. The immediate sacrifice of personal necessities made the charity more striking and, indeed, more effective, for if it could go to this length there would be no hesitation about the surrender of revenues. And in so doing Martin created a tradition; he was imitated in later ages by others who aspired to the highest Christian virtue, and similar stories were then attributed to

[1] Dial., II, 1.

many whom their biographers wished to glorify. It is scarcely necessary to say that such charity never became common, but Martin had crystallized for all time a standard which, once accepted as an ideal, made ordinary charity the rule rather than the exception for any who professed to be a Christian. Nor probably was Martin alone in his love of the poor, but, by the chance of biography, his acts became famous, and so a standard was fixed for the world to expect of its monks. And it was not of least importance that Martin was a bishop; it was not easy for others to remember that the man whose business it was to preach charity should, when opportunity offered, carry his practice beyond the limits of his preaching.

There runs throughout the other incidents which Sulpitius has recorded—they are really very few in number, for it was not then a biographer's business to write a diary of his hero's life—the same note of simple direct obedience to the Gospel counsels. Other bishops were humble in their private life, but Martin avoided as far as he could everything even in the exercise of his office which could give him extrinsic dignity. His clothing and appearance remained that of the poorest classes. Once on a journey along one of the roads of his diocese he was somewhat ahead of his attendant clergy and met one of the governmental wagons carrying a party of soldiers. The mules shied at Martin, and the occupants, thoroughly annoyed,

spent as much time belabouring the bishop as they did their horses. Martin did not reveal his identity —a bishop was then a person of great importance in the Roman Empire—but took the ill treatment without murmuring. It was only from others that the soldiers learnt their mistake, and even then Martin readily forgave them.[1]

So, too, he did not exact respect from his own clerics, even though it is clear that he required and obtained obedience. The Brice whom Martin upbraided for buying horses and slaves was allowed, both then and on other occasions, to use language to his bishop which was a scandal to the other clerics.[2] He openly made fun of the old man's absorption in prayer even when he was going on a journey. In the sixth century Gregory of Tours knew a story that, on one such occasion, Martin called Brice to order by remarking quietly that he had prayed that Brice might be punished by becoming a bishop. There is no solid foundation for this legend which may have been invented to account for the fact that Martin's successor at Tours was named Brice. It is not even certain that the Brice of the stories of Sulpitius was the same person, but the legend does embody a fact of Martin's psychology. His *nolo episcopari* before his election was no conventional attitude of humility but a very real recognition that the

[1] Dial., II, 3.
[2] Dial., III, 15.

episcopate was a burden, especially for one who would live as a monk. He seems to have adopted, like other ascetics, a number of little mortifications to preserve his own humility. He was never seen on the throne of his church, though he often celebrated the liturgy there, and on these occasions he had an ordinary priest's stool brought in for his own use.[1] Even on a midwinter visit to an outlying part of his diocese he refused the comfort of a straw bed which had been prepared for him. The sight of it tempted him to ease so he bundled the straw on the fire and thus set the place alight and barely escaped with his life.[2]

There is no suggestion in the stories which Sulpitius relates that Martin practised extraordinary mortifications. Rather, the biographer said, he persevered but was temperate in his abstinence and fasts.[3] The denial to himself of all comfort and ease, a denial which marked his whole life, was extraordinary because he was a bishop and not because he was a monk. Sulpitius indeed, after writing his biography, found it necessary to defend his claim that Martin was as good a monk as the fathers of the desert. Probably Martin had a different conception of his own mortifications and viewed the sacrifice of ease, partly at least, as a means to enable him to carry

[1] Dial., II, 1, 3.
[2] S.S. Ep., I.
[3] V.M., XXVI, 2.

out efficiently the office and work of a bishop. On one occasion, certainly, he succeeded by mortification where the exercise of his authority would have failed. It was the custom of the government in times of civil disturbance to send judges with discretionary powers to round up the disaffected, and to instil a salutary fear in their sympathizers by an execution or two. One Avetianus, famous for his severity, came on such a mission to Tours during Martin's episcopate. The execution of prisoners was announced for the morrow. Martin spent the night in prayer outside the judge's quarters and was found there by Avetianus. The latter was astounded at this sacrifice of dignity and comfort by one whose rank was equal at least to his own, and he acceded to Martin's request that the prisoners should be spared; he feared, he said, to provoke the wrath of heaven if he permitted the sufferings of Martin to go unrequited.[1] It was an attitude of mind which came natural to a Roman administrator, for fear of divine wrath had brought many of them to Christianity.

Martin not only set an ideal for the Christian bishops by his charity and his labours for his flock—an ideal which by the chance of a biography was to be accepted and become famous—but he taught them too the work of evangelization. The Empire was officially Christian and the provincial

[1] Dial., III, 4.

aristocracy were usually baptized before death. So, too, Paganism had almost died in the cities, for the populace naturally followed the official religion, and heathen worship had, since the advent of Gratian, been proscribed there. But Paganism was tolerated, and still retained a strong hold, in the little collections of people in country districts. Sometimes the old holy places of the Celts, a fountain or a hill, remained centres of worship. Sometimes they had been Romanized to the extent of honouring Mercury or Hercules or another god of the pantheon. Even where regular worship had ceased, the superstitions lingered and revived at harvest-time or in a period of pestilence. Martin spent much of his episcopate in journeying about his diocese, implanting the Christian faith in these country districts. Yet seldom does he seem to have appeared with the dignity or authority with which the State surrounded the Christian bishop. He obtained a hearing by some spectacular act of defiance to the heathen deities. At one village there was a pine which the people would not allow to be destroyed; Martin insisted that it should be cut down as associated with a false worship. They offered to do so if he would stay where they put him. On his acceptance they placed him where the pine would fall and began to chop at it. Martin remained praying and the pine fell the other way. Men said, on this occasion, that

the tree was actually seeming to fall on Martin, and then turned or was turned in a different direction.[1] The Pagans attributed to him miraculous powers, and on other occasions still more wonderful events were mentioned. Martin immediately seized these opportunities to preach the Gospel, and it was for this purpose, apparently, that he brought his attendant monks.

Nothing has survived of his preaching, but it must have been of singular persuasiveness. Sulpitius speaks, indeed, of his ease and readiness in handling the Sacred Scriptures, the grave urbanity of his speech about the things of God.[2] An occasional simile of his has been recorded, almost always of the simplest kind and somewhat like those attributed later to S. Patrick. He saw a sheep being shorn : there is true charity ; he had two coats and has given one to the needy. It was a simile which could be pressed far in an exhortation of almsgiving and would lead up to his own famous example. On another occasion he saw a swineherd clad in a rough coat of skins and feeding his pigs : there, he said, is the old Adam clad like an animal and feeding animals. It was not an inept illustration of the doctrine of fallen humanity. All that is said of him, his words and his acts, leaves the impression of a direct simplicity in thinking of spiritual things, a constant preoccupation

[1] V.M., XIII.
[2] V.M., XXV, 6.

with Christian doctrine, an unhesitating and complete practice of the exhortations of the Gospel.

He made no difference between rich and poor, for he seems on all occasions to have been more conscious of his mission than of his company. Even in the presence of the emperor—ecclesiastical business brought him into contact with Maximus, who, after the murder of Gratian, wore the purple and governed Gaul and Britain and Spain—Martin conceived it his duty simply to preach a personal obedience to the rules of Christian morality. Maximus was a firm upholder of Catholic orthodoxy, a persecutor of heretics; his wife was devout and he himself seems to have been sincere in his religion. He was most anxious to obtain the friendship of Martin, but this was refused because, as Martin told him, he had deprived one emperor of his throne and another of his life.[1] It was only when Maximus solemnly declared himself innocent of the murder (which he probably was) and pointed out that the army had truly chosen him as emperor that Martin consented to dine at his table. Even then he could not accommodate himself to courtly ways. The custom of Maximus was to present his guest with a loving cup which should then be handed to the emperor as being of the highest rank. Martin, however, when he had drunk, looked round the table and handed the cup to his own attendant priest, thinking, his

[1] V.M., XX, 2.

biographer said and the company assumed, that the simple priesthood was above all earthly dignities.[1]

III

Martin's apostolic labours were not limited to his own diocese. It was customary then for the bishops of a province or district to assemble for the obsequies of any of their brethren and for the election of his successor, and Martin is known to have visited other dioceses for this purpose. So, too, the business of councils took him to Trier and to Vienne. On each of these occasions his journey was occupied in preaching to the people. Such work must in all likelihood have had but a very temporary success. But Martin endeavoured to establish a monastery, i.e., a small group of priests or solitaries living a life of prayer, in all the places where he obtained converts, and so to provide for enduring centres of Christian worship.[2] To some extent his work was not forgotten. At Vienne a funeral inscription of the year 404 A.D. records with pride that the woman to whom it was erected had been baptized in that city by Martin; in other districts the roads along which he must have travelled to and from Trier, the political capital

[1] V.M., XX, 4.
[2] V.M., XIII, 9.

of Gaul, are marked by ancient chapels dedicated to his honour. Certainly the memory of the man persisted.

In all these cases Martin seems to have acquired a singular power over those to whom he spoke—whether they were individuals or crowds. No doubt his simple belief in the pre-eminence of the spiritual life, his unceasing preoccupation with the doctrines of the Christian religion, his unwearied warfare to model himself on the Christ he preached, account for much. Such things are potent to command the assent of men, but it was not to them that his biographer ascribed his victories over the Paganism of the country districts of Gaul, or over the strong-willed severity of secular authorities. In nearly every case Sulpitius Severus says that Martin commanded attention and terrified his adversaries by working a miracle. Indeed he has deliberately set down only those comparatively few incidents when such a miracle was said to have been worked. It is, of course, certain that the society of which Sulpitius was a member were very ready to believe in the occurrence of miracles. This was not a peculiarly Christian characteristic. The best Pagan society, even the great Roman administrators, were ready to believe in the most extraordinary fabulous monsters and wonders. So, when Sulpitius records that the pine tree was turned aside from Martin by divine intervention, we may well doubt whether the onlookers who

reported this were sufficiently expert woodsmen to know whether this was the case. On another occasion he records that after Martin's prayer a tempest overthrew the temple which the villagers would not let the bishop destroy; but the critic may justly point out that there was nothing to indicate miraculous action. All the incidents, however, are not such as these. Sulpitius describes, for instance, how Martin healed a girl of paralysis,[1] a leper of his leprosy,[2] a man of some disease of the eyes;[3] he describes two occasions on which Martin raised men from death or seeming death,[4] and puts the account of a third such miracle into the mouth of another, possibly because it was only hearsay. For it must be added that Sulpitius not only described these miracles during the lifetime of Martin, but gave details sufficient for them to be checked. The leprosy was healed he said in Paris, the paralysis at Trier, and several bishops were acquainted with the fact. He says that he himself had talked with the man (he had been one of Martin's fellow-monks at Ligugé) whom Martin raised from the dead. He gives the name of the official whose drowned slave was restored to life by Martin's prayer. It was Paulinus of Nola whose eyes were healed.

The statements made by Sulpitius are not there-

[1] V.M., XVI.
[2] V.M., XVII.
[3] V.M., XIX, 3.
[4] V.M., VII.

fore on the same footing as the wonders which the Pagan authors related with evident credulity, or with many others to be found in Christian hagiography. Those of Sulpitius were not passing wonders whose effect escaped control; these cases of healing could be verified by any who knew the men concerned or their friends. And in respect of the evidence also there is a difference. The Pagan authors and many Christian hagiographers relate their stories to people who are not only credulous but anxious to believe. Sulpitius offered his Life of S. Martin to a society which, for several reasons, was anxious to decry the glory of S. Martin and therefore to deny his miraculous gifts. To many of the bishops of Gaul Martin denied his communion during the last years of his life, and Sulpitius complains bitterly that some of the clergy refused to believe that his hero had wrought these miracles.[1] For this reason he added the names of persons and places so that his statements could be controlled. It may be that Sulpitius has exaggerated in places, it may be that he has misrepresented the enemies of Martin, but none save a fool would have related miracles with circumstantial details, unless the evidence of their occurrence were so good that enemies would find it difficult to deny.

Whatever then we may think of the extent of Martin's missionary activity during his lifetime—and the account of Sulpitius does not claim that

[1] Dial., I, 26, 4.

its range was very wide—its success was largely due to the belief in his miraculous powers. The populace seldom gave him a welcome, nor were they ready even to accord him a hearing. At one place it was said they drove him away; in another they made ready to slay him for daring to desecrate their temple.[1] Eloquence alone, even had he possessed it, would have availed little amongst the slave populations. Yet he procured by prayer and fasting—Sulpitius mentions three days, seven days,[2] as the length of these exercises—some signal of divine favour, and it was the consequent fear that brought the people to listen to his teaching. It is not even possible to suppose that the mere reputation of miracle-worker was the motive power of these conversions; it is doubtful whether such would have much effect amongst a people who had not yet accepted the religion of the preacher; but in any case there was no means for that reputation to be formed amongst the Pagan country populations of his diocese. Until Sulpitius wrote his biography, shortly before Martin's death, it is very doubtful whether men readily accepted such odd tales as were current in ecclesiastical and monastic circles.

[1] V.M., XIV.
[2] Dial., III, 14, 5.

IV

Whatever the methods Martin employed, he was certainly one of those who led the movement which finally made Gaul a Christian society. Till the beginning of the fourth century the Church had been a minority though a large, vigorous and enthusiastic body able to maintain itself despite persecution. The official acceptance of Christianity by the Empire had brought many thousands of voluntary conversions, particularly amongst the official classes and the dwellers of the cities. But with numbers there had come a loss of vigour. Many of the conversions were but worldly and nominal, and baptism, the real entry to the Church, was often postponed to the deathbed. Many of the bishops became court officials or so linked with governmental life as to lose that absorption in religion which alone can constitute an apostle. The Christian emperors of Constantine's line had been enthusiastic amateur theologians, and, even though they had failed in their endeavour to establish an heretical Christianity, to enthrone a conception of Christ as less than divine, their action was powerful to destroy the practical doctrinal independence and government of the Christian body as it had existed in the times of persecution. Ambrose of Milan did much in his life-

time to destroy this new theological conception of the Empire and to create an ideal of the Christian emperor for which men could fight, and his work was carried on by the great Popes of the next century, and notably by Leo the Great. But if society was to become Christian the old standards of intense devotion had to be revived, and the work of real conversion had to be carried into the mass of the people, whether they were citizens or slaves. Martin began that work in his own diocese and even beyond its limits. He implanted the ideals and standards of monastic life amongst the clergy. He took the pattern of saintliness which men believed could be attained only in the desert, and showed that it could be lived by those who preached the gospel and governed the Church of God. He founded little groups of men pledged to such a life, or at least to a life which came near to the pattern of the monks of the East. And above all he showed in his own career, and taught others to practise, monastic virtue by apostolic labours. No doubt there were others in his time who devoted themselves to this task: probably Martin's actual successes in evangelization were not extraordinary as far as numbers were concerned, but his example and his fame conquered the apathy of the Christian world and, by the time of his death, the institution of monasticism had obtained a firm hold in Gaul. The only contemporary description of his funeral [1]

[1] S.S. Ep., 3.

does not show more than a popularity in one part of his diocese, and seems indeed to hint that even there the monastic institution had many and powerful enemies. Within two generations of that event, ten of the bishops of Gaul joined in building a church to the honour of S. Martin, and the laity gave of their best that the work might be worthy of their saint.[1] In the next few generations the clergy were expected to be missionaries rather than courtiers, men of prayer rather than men of business. The destruction of Paganism went on apace, and Gaul became a Christian country. When, towards the end of the fifth century, the heathen Franks seized the government of the old Roman provinces, the faith of the people was sufficiently vigorous to convert their new masters. Clovis, the first Merovingian king, was said to have obtained the grace to desire baptism after a visit to the shrine of Martin, and, even though the story may not be true in fact, it is a dramatic summary of the historic development of Christian France.

Martin gained his victories over the tepidity of the bishops and the rooted Paganism of the people. But he himself did not so envisage the warfare. For him it was a heavenly combat in which he was the soldier of Christ, warring against demons and aided by the saints of heaven. He sought to give himself wholly to this warfare by giving himself

[1] Paulinus, de V.M., VI, 265 *sqq.*

wholly to prayer. Whether as a soldier or a monk or a bishop he sought to avoid the clamour of worldly things. He sought the solitude of the monastery at Milan, at Ligugé, at Marmoutiers, that he might pray. On his missionary journeys he walked or rode[1] ahead of his companions that he might suffer no distractions. He reduced his official business at the cathedral to a minimum that he might have time for meditation. His normal preparation for an onslaught on a Pagan solitude was three days spent in continuous prayer. So, too, his acts of charity sprang from the vision of Christ in the raiment of the beggar.[2] While still a soldier this acute sense of the Christian life was present to him : on the night after the famous division of his cloak he saw in a vision Christ clothed in that half which he had given to the beggar but a few hours before. So, too, in later days he conversed with the saints of God in meditation and believed they came to him in bodily form.[3] It was nothing to him that Christ should continue to work miracles. He tried to keep these secret from his followers and excluded them during those hours of prayer which preceded his efforts to effect a cure. But when he was suddenly faced with material difficulty he strove always to think that Christ could overcome it for his servant.

[1] Dial., II, 3.
[2] V.M., III.
[3] Dial., II, 13.

When he was in danger of being burnt to death by his own carelessness, and could not force open the door of his room, he was at first alarmed and shouted for help. Then remembering, so Sulpitius learnt, that safety lay not in flight but in the divine aid, he had recourse to the shield of faith and prayer, and the flames withdrew from him till help came and the door was opened.[1] When he thought the pine tree of Paganism was about to fall on his head he made the sign of the Cross and it fell in the other direction. But to Martin such victories over nature were things of little moment, for he believed his warfare to be against the demons. Again and again he was tempted in his prayers; these periods of solitude became periods of veritable strife. His companions heard him in colloquy with the evil spirits who appeared, so he said, in the forms of Jupiter, Mercury and Venus.[2] It was thus that he envisaged the war against Paganism. Sulpitius says nothing of the nature of these personal temptations, but two of his references would lead one to think that they were to spiritual vanity and disdain of others, two of the most insidious temptations to which the monastic life was liable. On one occasion, he says, a serene figure, crowned and clad in purple, came to Martin while at prayer and announced that he was the Lord Christ returned to the world, and come first

[1] S.S. Ep., I.
[2] V.M., XXII.

to visit his faithful servant. But Martin refused to believe in such an overwhelming favour, and declared his unwillingness to know Christ save in the form of suffering and pierced by nails. Immediately the form vanished and Martin knew that the devil was attempting to deceive him.[1] On another occasion the brethren of the monastery heard a voice chiding Martin because he admitted to their number many who, even after baptism, had been guilty of the gravest sins. Then they heard Martin's reply: "All who give up their sins must be absolved from them by the mercy of God." The voice urged that the lapsed had no hope of further pardon till Martin cried out: "O wretched devil, if you would cease from tempting men and would repent your evil deeds, even though this be the hour of judgment, I could promise you the mercy of Jesus Christ." [2]

It is rather important to insist on the fact of the intensity and simplicity of the spiritual life of the saints, even when considering their political importance. There is scarcely one of them who showed any understanding of the victories which they were gaining for the Church or for civilization, even when they were in the very act of doing so. And the reason for this curious attitude, so different from that of ordinary statesmen, seems to be that they despised the earthly triumphs of

[1] V.M., XXIV.
[2] V.M., XXII.

the Church as of slight importance compared with the warfare against the powers of darkness. The disappearance of organized Paganism, the liberty of the Church to teach the faith untrammelled, even the gaining of multitudes to the name of Christ seemed to them but the natural and inevitable but secondary results of a victory over evil but spiritual powers. Such at any rate seems to have been the attitude of Martin of Tours. It suggests perhaps to modern minds a man of simple credulity, whose religion was intensely emotional, and so perhaps rather less dogmatic and logical than that of the theologians. To correct such a picture in the case of Martin is easy. When he became bishop the passion of Christians for the shrines of martyrs had already begun to spread into Gaul. Historians have pointed out how this devotion, and the accompanying veneration of relics, must have greatly aided the transition from the old worship, which centred round hallowed springs and hills and trees, to the new religion of the Catholic Church. But it is not so often pointed out that the Church officially imposed very severe checks on the spread of such worship, and forbade it altogether unless there were authentic relics in the shrine. The bishops made strenuous efforts to prevent that easy natural transition by which the shrine of a Pagan deity might become the altar of a Christian martyr. Nor was Martin wanting in this episcopal duty. When he was elected to

Tours he found that his predecessor had consecrated an altar on a spot where, tradition said, a Christian martyr had met his death. Martin could not find solid grounds for this tradition and refused to take part in the devotions, holding them to be superstitious. Finally he prayed to God publicly for means to know the truth of the matter. According to the onlookers a voice was heard admitting that the corpse there honoured was that of a malefactor, rightly condemned for his crimes. Martin denounced the honour given to the locality as superstitious and had the altar removed.[1]

Despite this cautious avoidance of superstition, Martin was in no way opposed to the practice of the Catholic Church in honouring the tombs and relics of the martyrs. Nor did he in any other way allow his fervent asceticism to wander into the paths of heresy. In the year 381 A.D., about ten years after Martin became bishop of Tours, the Church in Spain was troubled by a movement which has been named after its leader Priscillian. In its origin it seems to have been a protest against the comfortable worldly life of many of the bishops. Priscillian, a rich and cultured layman, practised a rigid asceticism, a life of prayer and celibacy and mortification. But he and his followers taught that all Christians were bound so to live if they would be saved, and finally went so far as to denounce worldly comforts, and even marriage

[1] V.M., XI.

and all material things, as evil in themselves. The natural tendency of a wealthy society suddenly to adopt a puritanic Manichæism once more showed itself in the history of the world. Priscillian, who had obtained a bishopric, appealed to the Pope of Rome and S. Ambrose to support him against the older bishops of Spain. He was repulsed and the Church, left to herself, was prepared to expel him from her communion. Then he sought the aid of the secular magistrates of Spain and by their aid silenced his adversaries. The heresy had obtained a firm hold not only in Spain but in Aquitaine with which Spain was linked by administrative ties. Just then (in the year 383) Maximus assumed the purple and Gaul and Spain accepted his authority. The Catholic bishops obtained his ear and an ecclesiastical council met at Bordeaux, and Priscillian and his supporters were deposed from their sees and excommunicated.

The Spanish bishops who condemned Priscillian were not only known for their worldly lives but wanted to brand as heretics all who gave themselves to asceticism.[1] Yet Martin, despite his own practices, never hesitated about the condemnation of Priscillian. Asceticism based on heretical doctrine was anathema to him even though he had to be associated with the worldly in condemning it. He was probably present at the council of Bordeaux, and certainly associated himself with the

[1] Chron., I, 50.

canons there decreed against Priscillian and his followers.[1]

The sequel of the incident reveals yet other characteristics of the great bishop. Priscillian appealed to the secular authority to override the decision of the council, and his opponents, nothing loath, made an appeal on their part that the secular criminal law should be enforced against the heretics. Immediately Martin journeyed to Trier and after long delay obtained an audience of Maximus. He told the emperor that it was unheard-of iniquity that a secular judge should intervene in a matter of the faith; the sentence of deposition had been pronounced in due form and should be carried out; but the bishops had no right to appeal to Cæsar to punish their adversaries, nor had he the right to judge a doctrinal matter. The opponents of Priscillian did not hesitate to say that Martin was himself a sympathizer with heresy, but the charge was so manifestly false that it was not seriously considered. Maximus promised that he would follow Martin's advice and the latter set out for his diocese. In his absence the matter was again brought forward, and Maximus, wishing, no doubt, to strengthen his authority by pleasing the Spanish bishops, and anxious perhaps finally to crush the seeds of disorder, allowed the case to go forward. Priscillian was accused of sorcery and gross

[1] Chron., I.

immorality—capital crimes of the civil law—was condemned and executed. Maximus further prepared a decree enabling civil judges to inquire into the spread of the heresy and to seek out and punish its adherents by confiscation and death. Before this commission had begun its work, or certainly before it had gone far, Martin was back in Trier. His opponents implored Maximus to refuse to receive him, but the emperor preferred to negotiate.[1] If Martin would consent to communicate with the bishops who had consented to Priscillian's execution, if he would join in the consecration of Felix, the new bishop of Trier, then Maximus would revoke the commission.

It was a difficult decision to put before Martin. He had refused his communion to the persecutors and believed that they were guilty of a grave crime against Christian law. Until they repented publicly his duty as a bishop was to regard them as excluded from the Church's sacraments, as deprived of their authority. Yet, on the other hand, the crime of which they had been guilty, the execution of Priscillian, was already accomplished; the much more serious matter, the execution of the many misguided adherents of the heretic, the indiscriminate and often unjust punishment of many simple folk—for the governmental commissions, bent on a profit for the revenue, would be more anxious to obtain victims than to destroy

[1] Dial., III, 12.

heresy—could be avoided if Martin would give a tacit approbation of the erring bishops. The question was posed between charity and the maintenance of Church discipline. The bishops had been guilty of no error against faith—but they had renounced into the hands of Cæsar the authority which God had given them. So Martin saw the question and Martin allowed his charity to overcome his sense of episcopal duty. Yet before the consecration of Felix was over Martin had repented his weakness—he refused to put into writing any exoneration of the court prelates, and on his journey from Trier he was smitten with remorse. He told his followers that an angel came to him in his prayers and rebuked him for his compliance.[1] Even for the sake of charity Martin, though he wanted to spare those whom he believed to be heretics, believed it wrong to jeopardize even for a moment the absolute freedom of the Church from secular authority.

V

The history of the Priscillianist affair supplies a necessary corrective to loose conceptions of Martin's influence. It has been asked by some whether the bishop of Tours really enjoyed great popularity during his life, and whether therefore

[1] Dial., III, 13.

he could have done much for the refashioning of society. The double question conceals a fallacy, for it is only in modern conditions that men are led to think that popularity is necessary and efficient to great works. Before the belief in democracy men understood that the applause of their fellows meant little more than a willingness to accept the prevalent beliefs and a desire to praise contemporary customs. They understood then that if a man would change the course of history he must set himself against the way of the world and must be prepared for hatred rather than applause. Especially was this true of those whom the Church has canonized, and especially of S. Martin. Everywhere he saw the devil either in possession or warring for it, and he never ceased to attack the strongholds. So on his missions he did not seek the applause of his hearers but tried to show them that his claims were true. Though success meant a temporary popularity, Martin did not wait to gather the fruits; he passed on to other fields where Christ's harvest awaited the reaper, and again the struggle began. Such a man was courting opposition and was throwing away such popularity as came his way, for it is a delicate flower and needs constant watering.

Even when great men like Maximus realized his worth and were ready and anxious to have him near them, Martin could not consent to practise that occasional blindness so necessary if one is to

live happily with the great ones of the world. He could not learn to treat Maximus as above the reproach of episcopal authority, nor could he consent to hide his monastic life lest his episcopal brethren should feel awkward. The opponents of Priscillian wished to keep him away from court[1] where his way of life invited comparison with theirs, and Maximus found that his proffered friendship received from Martin the buffets of constant criticism. Even though Martin both by example and word was striving to hallow the secular government and the officials of the Church, even though they could wonder at his holiness and admire his charity, he was not the man to make the lives of his fellow-rulers a self-contented one. How, indeed, could he do so when he himself felt that the duties of his episcopal office made his spiritual life more and not less difficult?[2] Once half humorously he complained that since he became a bishop he had never been so conscious of God's grace as he had been when a simple monk. Quite seriously he must have been conscious that his one great entry into the wider interests of Church and State—the affair of the Priscillianists—had led only to misfortune. He had not saved the bishops from shedding blood; he had started a local schism in the Church of Gaul between those who would and those who would not communicate with Felix, the

[1] Dial., III, 12, 1.
[2] Dial., II, 4, 1.

bishop who was consecrated at Trier. Felix was a man of upright and strict life,[1] but he was elected by those who had done Priscillian to death, and neither the bishop of Rome nor S. Ambrose would consent to join with him in the divine sacrifice. They took the same view of the matter as Martin did, but it was not shared by many of Martin's brethren in Gaul. There the party of spiritual ideals was small, the bishops who fawned on secular government were many; the opportunity of raising the standards of the episcopate by friendly intercourse seemed to have passed. Martin avoided for the rest of his life the councils of the bishops.[2]

Yet despite this failure he seems not to have regretted his action. There had been a great wrong done and he must condemn it; a great wrong was contemplated and he must strive to prevent it. So he viewed his mission as a bishop. Wherever evil was dominant, wherever Satan had a stronghold, there Martin attacked. Such a man could not hope for popularity; it might come for a moment after some slight success, or it might be found amongst the monks who were trying to live after his example; but the nature of governors is to be cruel and the life of a monk is hard. Since Martin set himself to rebuke cruelty and to frustrate it, since he conceived it his duty to urge on his

[1] Dial., III, 13, 2.
[2] Dial., III, 13, 6.

monks to the heights of the spiritual life, he was courting the dislike of his fellow-men. However, this was the course he chose and he pursued it to the end.

Though Sulpitius Severus may not have given the biography to the world till after the death of Martin, he was artistically right not to add to it an account of the scene. The work of Martin was, in a way, only beginning when he died. Men said afterwards that his prayers obtained for the country of his adoption an abundance of graces and miracles; at least it is true that his example and his teaching wrought mightily for the change which followed. A letter of Sulpitius Severus says that on his death-bed, when the attendant monks begged him not to leave them, he raised himself up to pray: "O Lord, if I am still necessary for Thy people's weal, I do not refuse the task." [1] And it was Martin who captured the imagination of the Pagan Franks when they conquered the provinces of Gaul; and it was through them politically that Christianity was saved in Western Europe.

[1] S.S. Ep., 3.

NOTE

The chief sources for the life of S. Martin are two works of Sulpitius Severus—the *Vita B. Martini*, and the *Dialogi*. They are entirely different in form. The former is a real attempt at Christian biography—possibly the first. It does not merely describe the asceticism of its hero and his holy death, as had been done for earlier Christian saints, but claims to set out his life by selecting incidents which cover the whole course of it up to the time of writing. It was written before the death of Martin, and the author states that he has obtained the facts either from the hero or from those who knew him intimately. On the other hand the *Dialogi* were written half a dozen years after the death of Martin. They are in the form of conversations, a form common enough in classical tradition and in which the author did not vouch for the truth of the facts himself but rather presented them as of general report. The characters who introduce the stories are as often as not supposititious, and the statements they make about themselves are inserted merely to give dramatic effect to the narrative. This difference of form supplies a criterion for the use of the *Vita*

and the *Dialogi*. In the latter the statements do not claim to be more than matter of common report, and therefore one can deduce from them only those facts without which such report would be impossible. If we can discover on other grounds that the stories they relate refer to historical personages, and if they are such as could be easily checked at the time of writing—conditions which are sometimes verified—they can be treated as historical. In dealing with the *Vita*, however, we have to remember that our witness claims to speak the truth. We do not need, therefore, always to know from other evidence that his characters are historical; he would not introduce them if they were not. Provided he has been sufficiently definite to enable his own contemporaries to check his statements, we can be sure that the statements are historical. And if he is a man of good repute and is not detected to have falsified any of the facts, we can take his own statements of fact as good evidence, always of course remembering that his judgments may have been mistaken.

When this difference between the *Vita* and the *Dialogi* is taken into consideration the chronological difficulties in connection with S. Martin disappear. In the Life it is said that Martin served under Julian at Worms and that his military service ceased there.[1] This date is known: it is

[1] V.M., IV.

the year 356 A.D. Sulpitius says further that Martin served five years in the army, and that his baptism took place after three of them.[1] This fixes the date of his entry into military service as 351 A.D., of his baptism as 354 A.D. Sulpitius also gave Martin's age at his baptism, but the number has been differently copied in the extant manuscripts, the earliest of which date from the seventh and ninth centuries, as eighteen, twenty-two, and twenty-five. He says further that Martin was called up at the age of fifteen. If this refers to the beginning of the military service, it would fix his age at baptism as eighteen, but it may refer merely to his matriculation, and in that case would make the second figure, twenty-two, a possible one. It is further to be noticed that Sulpitius Severus says that Martin was called up by an edict of the emperors,[2] and this use of the plural can only refer, as Sulpitius uses it, to the period of the joint reign of Constantius and Constans 337 A.D.—350 A.D. It is therefore consistent with the other data supplied by Sulpitius Severus. These then fix the birth of Martin as occurring between 332 A.D. and 336 A.D., and make the end of that period more probable. The Life does not enable us to fix any other dates in Martin's career.

When we turn to the Dialogues some seeming difficulties arise. An incident is related in which

[1] V.M., II, 6, and III, 5.
[2] V.M., II, 5.

Martin meets the Emperor Maximus and the bishop is said to be a septuagenarian.[1] This would be sometime in the years 383 A.D.—387 A.D., when Martin could not have been more than fifty-five. But the essence of the remark in the Dialogues is that Martin was so old that it was not necessary for him so constantly to avoid the company of ladies as it might otherwise have been. Further, it must be remembered that Sulpitius is only quoting a hearsay remark, and that the passion for exact computations from a known and fixed date began a little after the time of Severus. It does not seem, therefore, that this remark, given in the Dialogues as made by another in the heat of argument, need be taken as an accurate indication. Further, it is sometimes supposed that a phrase in the Dialogues makes Martin to have been bishop, and to have come across Valentinian and his Arian wife, Justina, just after Valentinian had arrived in Gaul. The latter fact took place in 365 A.D., while Valentinian married Justina in 368 A.D. The phrase[2] used, however, says no more than that the meeting took place sometime after Valentinian's accession to authority, i.e. probably sometime after 367 A.D. when he became emperor.

Another difficulty is supposed to arise out of the statement that Martin lived for sixteen years after

[1] Dial., II, 7, 4.
[2] Dial., II, 5, 5.

the Priscillianist process.[1] The phrase almost certainly (but not quite) is meant to be dated from the time of the election of Felix (385 A.D.). In that case it would put Martin's death in 400-401 A.D. We can scarcely suppose that even in an age careless of arithmetic a man would make such a statement without checking it. But it is still less credible that in a book published in 404 A.D., at the latest, a mistake was made as to the date of a man's death which had certainly occurred within the previous seven years. So I should conclude that the figure which Sulpitius wrote must almost certainly be accurate. But the difficulty really lies there, for the scribes of the earliest manuscripts of the Dialogues do not seem to have been perfect. It is very easy to read XIII as XVI, and this may have been done. In that case the date of Martin's death would be 397 A.D.—398 A.D.

The only specific dates for the consecration and death of S. Martin come from Gregory of Tours. If this sixth century historian really copied from monuments or records of his church which dated back to the time of Martin's immediate successors, we could accept his evidence with some certainty. But Gregory had a passion for arithmetic of an elementary kind, and it may be that his record is based on insecure sources. However, for what it is worth, his figures give the dates 370-371 A.D. for the election, 397 A.D. for the death of Martin,

[1] Dial., III, 13, 6.

which correspond roughly with what may be the data of the Dialogues as Sulpitius wrote them.

There are a few subsidiary sources for a life of S. Martin. Paulinus of Nola made a few references to him in his letters; Sulpitius in his *Chronica* dealt with him in connection with the suppression of the Priscillianists; he also wrote three letters (of which one perhaps was meant for publication) which deal expressly with incidents of the life of S. Martin. Two generations after the works of Sulpitius, Paulinus of Périgueux turned them into verse at the request of Perpetuus, the contemporary bishop of Tours who, with nine other bishops of Gaul, joined to further the honour of S. Martin both by writings and buildings. A century later Gregory of Tours used some inscriptions recorded by them to expand slightly the information given by Sulpitius, but neither in his *Virtutes Sancti Martini* nor in his *Historia Francorum* does he add much that is reliable to our knowledge of S. Martin.

Of recent studies the most interesting is that by M. Babut.[1] He tries first to show that Sulpitius Severus is deliberately untrustworthy as a biographer and then attempts to reconstruct the life of S. Martin on this assumption. P. de Labriolle, in his *Histoire de la Littérature Latine Chrétienne*, seems inclined to accept M. Babut's conclusions; M. Jullian in his *Histoire de la Gaule*,

[1] Babut, *S. Martin de Tours.*

Vol. VII, is critical of them and does not use them in the account which he gives; P. Delehaye in the *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. XXXVIII, rejects them altogether. The permanent interest of M. Babut's study is that he points out that S. Martin in his lifetime, and by the evidence of Sulpitius Severus himself, was not regarded as a great man but was certainly an unpopular one. For the rest M. Babut's attempt seems to me to break down because he has not examined the evidence with sufficient attention to detail.

The attack on the veracity of Sulpitius Severus is made on two counts. First he is accused of contradicting himself in the matter of chronology. I have already shown that this is not the case and have dealt with the instances of it alleged by M. Babut. In the same category, however, comes a curious argument. M. Babut supposes that if, as Sulpitius Severus says, Martin stayed with Hilary of Poitiers in the year 356 A.D., he would have mentioned that he knew the bishop was then menaced with exile, and that Sulpitius would certainly have recorded the fact.[1] Such a supposition seems to me not only unwarranted but absurd.

The second charge against Sulpitius Severus is that he copied from other lives, and transferred incidents to Martin without any warrant of fact. The evidence which M. Babut advances for

[1] Pages 69-70.

plagiarism is curious. He gives a typical example in supposing that Sulpitius Severus copied the words *evangelii non surdus auditor* from a letter of Paulinus of Nola.[1] It is surely much more likely that both were merely using the words of the psalmist as they were applied in Christian ascetics. And the page of borrowings from the *Vita Antonii*, which M. Babut alleges,[2] have not even the common character given by a single model. He admits that the words are not borrowed but asserts that the facts are. Yet the examples he offers merely show that there are some incidents which occur in the life of every man, and yet are thought worthy of record by most biographers. For instance I cannot see that Sulpitius was copying when he said that "Martin sprang from parents who were Pagans but not of the lowest class in worldly dignity"; while the author of the other life says that "Antony sprang from parents who were noble and devout Egyptians."[3] Yet this is an example alleged by M. Babut.

Besides asserting that Sulpitius misstated facts consciously, M. Babut tries to show that, at the time of writing the *Vita*, the author had but little knowledge of his hero. Again he bases his argument on suppositions connected with the literary use of the words. He dates the publica-

[1] Page 57, n. 4.
[2] Page 76.
[3] Page 76.

tion of the *Vita* by supposing that Christian honorific titles were only applied to a man after his death,[1] although in the passage he examines there is no statement at all that Martin is dead. He says that in the *Vita* the hero is supposed to be dead,[2] although there is no statement of the fact as having occurred nor, as far as I can see, any evidence for it. Finally he argues that Sulpitius could not have known Martin before the year 389 A.D. because his "conversion" took place in that year.[3] But this is only valid if we assume that Sulpitius and Martin both belonged by sympathy to the Priscillianists, a supposition which can only be made if we also assume that Sulpitius falsified the facts in his writing. The argument is therefore a vicious circle. But M. Babut is not content with this. Sulpitius Severus, in a rhetoric statement at the end of his book, says that even before he knew Martin he had burned with the desire to write his life, and M. Babut supposes that this must mean that the *Vita* was written shortly after the first visit.[4] It is not apparent on what grounds one must suppose that a desire, however ardent, to write a biography connotes an early fulfilment.

M. Babut uses his conclusion, that the account

[1] Page 56, n. 1.
[2] Page 55.
[3] Page 55.
[4] Page 58.

of the *Vita* is false, in examining the question of those who would not communicate with Felix of Triers and the other bishops who had approved the execution of the Priscillianists. He assumes that Sulpitius Severus and the anti-Felicians began as sympathizers with the doctrines of the Priscillianists,[1] that they were definitely excluded from the communion of the bishops of Gaul,[2] and that S. Martin, though secretly in sympathy with the little schism, remained officially in communion with his brother bishops.[3] On all these points he rejects the evidence of Sulpitius Severus and supposes that the latter was writing with deliberate intention to suppress the truth. I have already shown that his allegations of inaccuracy are false. His manner of treating the evidence of the anti-Felician schism is unhistorical. He argues that it was a real schism, whereas the references to it by the Council of Nimes and by Innocent I show clearly that they regarded it as a local quarrel likely to lead to schism.[4] He assumes that the party who supported Felix must be the Catholic one because it comprised most of the bishops of Gaul.[5] He assumes that when Maximus described himself as the Catholic champion he was thinking

[1] Page 31.
[2] Page 157.
[3] Page 164.
[4] Pages 156-157.
[5] Page 31.

of this quarrel, and not of the far more important Arian heresy which was still supported by Justina.[1] He assumes that, because Pope Zosimus was in communication with the supporters of Felix, he condemned the anti-Felicians; and that S. Ambrose was silenced when he wished to support the latter,[2] although there is no evidence at all of such things. Finally he assumes that in all the manuscript records of the Council of Turin a *non* was omitted so that, though the texts treat the Felicians as needing reconciliation, M. Babut wants to suppose that the bishops made the statement about anti-Felicians.[3] Such a proceeding, warranted by no manuscript, cannot be justified, and is further wrong because the context appeals to the authority of S. Ambrose, who said himself that he refused to communicate with the Felicians. In fact it must be said that the contemporary statements of Sulpitius Severus are in accordance with other contemporary evidence, while the theory of M. Babut is not.

In order to render probable his thesis that Sulpitius Severus falsified the facts, M. Babut is at pains to show that there is an "omission of the name of S. Martin by all the Gauls of the generation who followed him";[4] that from Sulpitius

[1] Page 160.
[2] Page 160 n.
[3] Page 162.
[4] Page 14.

Severus to the Marseilles Chronicle of the year 452 A.D. the account of the *Vita* was not accepted by any writer in a position to control the facts. This argument first of all puts on one side Paulinus of Nola and Sulpitius Severus as being prejudiced, and then asks for a judgment when the two chief Gaulish writers of the period have been excluded. It is precisely because they are the two chief witnesses, and because M. Babut's theory of their veracity breaks down, that they must be accepted. But they are not in fact alone. As M. Babut admits,[1] the earliest redaction of the chronicle of Prosper of Aquitaine, which dates from the year 433 A.D., expressly says that Martin was held by many to be a glorious man. It may be, as M. Babut insists, that this implies that many refused to admit his glory, but this is precisely what Sulpitius Severus says and confirms his testimony. Further, as M. Babut also admits, the notary of Ambrose, Paulinus, and Sosomen the Greek historian, both of the generation which followed Martin's death, expressly accept the testimony of Sulpitius Severus. The former indeed writes as though he and S. Augustine were agreed on the point,[2] and was in an excellent position to control the general facts, for Ambrose had three times at least been in intimate contact with the Church of Gaul during the episcopate of S. Martin.

[1] Page 18.
[2] V.A., 1.

The silence of which M. Babut makes so much, then, reduces to that of S. Jerome and of Rufinus, both of whom limited their admiration of recent saints to those who had fought for the faith against Arianism—and it was never Martin's lot to be a leader in that combat.

The last point of criticism against M. Babut is his treatment of the account of the miracles of S. Martin. He supposes that Sulpitius Severus in addition to, or rather to support, his lying defence of the anti-Felician schism, set out to write a collection of miracles to please contemporary piety, and to gain credit for the hero he had chosen to represent his cause. M. Babut argues that in this he set himself to imitate and outdo the stories of Pagan miracle workers.[1] As a matter of fact there is no need to seek such a parentage for the *Vita;* Christian literature already contained records of the miracles of its saints, and there is no doubt that Christian piety believed the working of miracles to be a good test of saintliness. Assuming that Sulpitius Severus was himself uncritical of events which struck him as wonderful, and was desirous even to believe that miracles happened, what are we to say? If, as M. Babut maintains, Sulpitius was an evident liar, we should have to reject his evidence unless it was supported by other explicit statements by independent and critical witnesses. But if, as I have shown, Sulpitius was careful only

[1] Pages 89-112.

to state what he had observed or been told by others, we shall have to see whether the statements he gives require us to believe that a miracle happened or not. Sulpitius Severus is a true witness, but we remain the judges whether a miracle happened. In regard to the events recorded in the *Dialogi* there is no question, for we are not certain that Sulpitius intended to relate them as more than hearsay. But with regard to those of the *Vita* the proper names he gives are those of real persons, and so his statements were exposed to proper control. Where, then, he states as a fact that a miracle occurred, we can take it that this is what appeared to the onlookers; if the event is capable of a natural explanation and yet could deceive the onlookers, then the miracle is not proved; when either condition is lacking, then, the evidence must be accepted. The historian can pay no attention to the hypothesis of some philosophers that miracles never occur. The question is merely one of evidence, and in that matter the statements of philosophers, the records and observations of scientists (which are in many cases not capable of experimental repetition), must be submitted to the tests of evidence to see how far they have been subject to control; the record of miracles is on exactly the same footing.[1]

[1] I wrote this note under the impression that M. Babut was still alive. I have since learnt that he died in battle in 1916.

S. WILFRID

I

The conversion of England stands out among the successes of the Catholic Church in dealing with the barbarian races. The island was divided into well-organized Christian bishoprics at the beginning of the fourth century, but the victories of various Teutonic leaders had lost it in the fifth century both to the Church and to the Roman world. By the end of the sixth century the southern and eastern shores, from which there was communication with the Continent, belonged to kingdoms where a well-organized Paganism[1] had replaced Christian worship; the same was true of all the country north of the Humber. In the centre the situation was obscure; there still existed a province where the organization of the Church was maintained, but its ruler was frequently allied with neighbouring Pagan groups,[2] and men with British names are found later ruling over a kingdom which was wholly Pagan.

[1] H.E., III, 8; Steph., 13.
[2] H.E., II, 20.

The direct object of the missionaries whom Pope Gregory sent to England at the end of the sixth century was to convert the heathen to the Christian faith. Their task was similar to that which had already been partly achieved with regard to the Goths, the Suevi, the Franks, and the Lombards. Within ten years Augustine and his fellow-monks had converted the rulers of territory both north and south of the Thames, and sufficient nobles had followed the example of their kings to enable Augustine to establish bishoprics at Canterbury, Rochester, and London.[1] Twenty years later the occasion of a royal marriage sent Paulinus, one of the monks of Canterbury, to the court of Edwin, the ruler of the people who dwelt north of the Humber. In three years Paulinus (and the Christians whom he had brought with him) effected the conversion of the king, and the latter's adherence to Christianity was well received by the nobles of his court.[2]

The Christian doctrine on which the missionaries most insisted and which most impressed the Pagans seems to have been that they were messengers of a future life of blessedness in the kingdom of the living God, reserved for those who accepted their teaching and obeyed it.[3] It seems likely that the Pagan religion which was abandoned did not

[1] H.E., II, 3.
[2] H.E., II, 14.
[3] H.E., I, 25.

possess a doctrine of future reward.[1] Despite the ready acceptance of Christianity, however, the old heathenism was far from being completely vanquished. It was no mere worship of streams and hills and the local deity, as in the case of some of the tribes of Saxony; it had on the contrary its temples and images,[2] and a priesthood governed by its own laws.[3] The conversion of the kings was accepted by the nobles, but sufficient sympathy for Paganism remained to make its restoration by any of the kings an easy matter. Sometimes the apostasy was due to the succession of a prince who had only conformed during his father's reign; on other occasions, as in Northumbria and Essex, it was due to a temporal misfortune which the profession of Christianity had not averted. Even in the last recorded case—that of the people north of the Thames estuary in 665 A.D.—the heathen temples were still standing and apparently the organization could easily be restored.[4]

These relapses into Paganism are sometimes insufficiently stressed in telling the history of the conversion of England. Particularly they must be borne in mind in any estimate of the work of the great bishops of the latter half of the seventh

[1] H.E., II, 13.
[2] H.E., III, 8; II, 13; III, 30.
[3] H.E., II, 13; Steph., 13.
[4] H.E., III, 30.

century. The developments for which Theodore and Wilfrid were in large measure responsible, which took place between the Council of Whitby in 664 A.D. and the death of Wilfrid in 710 A.D., were not wrought in a society accepting Christianity as a matter of course; to the older nobles and the kings, at least, the alternative of a return to the gods of their ancestors still appeared possible, and it made the work of the churchmen correspondingly difficult.

Nor could the mere profession of the Christian faith, and the consequent exchange of courtesies with the Pope, be regarded as the terminus of ecclesiastical activity at this time. There were moral evils to be redressed. The return to Paganism had meant a reversion to barbarian marriage customs, for it was the marriage law of the Church which pressed most hardly on the kings and nobles of the little kingdoms of England. There was the work of civilization to be forwarded. Slavery was the frequent outcome of the wars between these barbarian peoples and a normal condition in their society.[1] The tradition of the Catholic Church bade her bishops secure an amelioration at least of the condition of the lowest strata of the population. The arts of peace had not been preserved, save perhaps in the westerly parts of the island. The worst

[1] H.E., III, 5; IV, 20.

example no doubt was Canterbury where, before the time of Ethelbert, the law was merely unwritten custom. In Northumbria the art of record seems to have survived, since Wilfrid could claim to give a list of the territories which had belonged to the Church before the invading Teutons had destroyed it north of the Humber.[1] Even here, however, culture had come to an end with Christianity, for the re-introduction of manuscripts by Wilfrid was regarded with wonder, and recorded as amongst his notable achievements. The situation is best summarized perhaps by the condition of the towns. Some few built of stone still survived, but the royal court, i.e., the king and the nobles, was more or less nomadic, moving from one royal villa to another, and these were always some distance from the remaining towns and, like the villages, were built of wood.[2] The invaders had not always destroyed, but they did not know how to restore or imitate those cities of the Romans which were a sign and a necessary condition of settled life. The normal organization of the Church in dioceses demanded the recovery of that element of civilization, and when Gregory sent his missionaries to England he evidently thought that they would choose the old Roman cities as the natural centres of their work. So he bade them establish bishoprics in Canterbury,

[1] Steph., 17.
[2] H.E., III, 16.

York and London. Unfortunately the condition of England was considerably worse than Gregory pictured. It was divided not so much into provinces as into tribes. The memory of the old racial divisions was dying out though it still survived in the eighth century and is reflected in the pages of Bede. Probably it was stronger still in the seventh century, stronger perhaps than Bede suggests. And like all barbarian traditions it was an occasion for frequent wars. Penda, the King of the Mercii, twice attacked and overthrew the king of those who dwelt north of the Humber, and devastated their country; the kings of the West Saxons twice subjugated the kings of the South Saxons; the rulers of the two peoples who dwelt north of the Humber were constantly trying to overthrow one another, but success was seldom so final that it became unnecessary for each to be ruled separately. In this condition of constant war, communication between neighbouring kingdoms was not easy; all that the road means to civilization was still unrealized, and communication between one part of the island and another was, in the first half of the seventh century, usually made by sea.[1] Such conditions were not favourable to the establishment of territorial bishoprics which, in the Catholic organization, must of necessity be in peaceful communion with one another.

[1] H.E., III, 15.

But Gregory's plan was unworkable chiefly for another reason. So long as the barbarian wars continued society was grouped round and dependent on its leaders, the king and his comitatus of nobles. The conversion of the country depended on the conversion of the royal courts, and, in fact, each bishop found that he had to become the royal chaplain. The great Gregory had urged the restoration of the ancient sees, but in practice it had been but nominal. Almost a hundred years after Augustine's arrival the archbishop of Canterbury was still attached permanently to the court of the King of Kent and had no separate residence of his own;[1] the King of the Northumbrians could still recall Bishop Cedd from his work south of the Trent, and send him elsewhere, because he belonged to his people;[2] the King of the West Saxons appointed and got rid of his bishops as he saw fit;[3] the King of the Northumbrians and his son—the sub-king of Deira—each sent off his own priest to be consecrated bishop of the people after the Council of Whitby.[4] Unless the bishops were delivered from this subjection, unless they could act independently of the kings and their nobles, criticizing them, judging them, teaching them, there was no

[1] H.E., IV, 1.
[2] H.E., III, 22.
[3] H.E., III, 8.
[4] H.E., III, 28.

opportunity for the Church to carry out her work of civilization and peace, and small chance indeed for her to enforce effectively and rapidly an improvement in the morals of the people.

Such work was as necessary socially as it was natural to the Church, but there were many methods of bringing it to effect; actually it was the outcome of the quarrels of many good and great men—of whom three are canonized saints—in the latter half of the seventh century. Their quarrels were as bitter seemingly as those of kings or nobles, but for some reason or another the quarrels of the saints seem to have borne the fruit of peace and order.

II

The control of the kings over the Church had often had a fatal effect on the religion of barbarian tribes. The Visigoths in Spain had maintained the Arian heresy for more than a century as their own faith, and had thereby separated themselves from their Catholic subjects. Though the various barbarian groups which had obtained kingdoms in England were now all Catholic, some one of their leaders might have seized on an ecclesiastical quarrel to oppose himself to another, and thereby have made a schism in the Church. Actually this

had been somewhat the attitude of the remaining British kingdoms. They had refused to attempt the conversion of the barbarians and, even after papal missionaries had done their work, they refused to accept communion with their invaders. The hatred of the barbarian was a far stronger motive than their love of Christianity, and Cadwalla, the King of the Britons, gladly gave his assistance to the heathen Penda in overthrowing the Christian Northumbrians, and seems indeed to have been a leading spirit in the destruction of their country.[1] His spirit, the desire to see all barbarians expelled from the land,[2] may have prompted the obstinacy of the British bishops in refusing to co-operate with the Roman missionaries. The latter were very insistent that the British should alter the calculation they employed for the date of Easter, and so conform to contemporary papal usage. The British were using a calculation which they had received from Rome nearly two hundred years earlier, and would not surrender their tradition. The exhortions of Rome, sent to them through the archbishops of Canterbury, were of no avail, but, in the defect of documents from their side, we cannot tell whether their objection was based on veneration for the practice of their predecessors or mere dislike of the messengers of the papacy. Certainly no question

[1] H.E., II, 20.
[2] *Ibid.*

of heresy or schism arose as regards Rome, for no such sentence had been formulated, but the British bishops made the quarrel an excuse to refuse communion with those whom they could not but regard as the bishops of invading barbarian tribes.

This question of the date of Easter and the consequent arrangement of the ecclesiastical year had a special importance in the kingdoms north of the Humber. When the British Christians and the Pagan Mercii had devastated that land the missionaries from Canterbury had fled, there had been a year of apostasy on the part of the rulers,[1] and the work of conversion had to be recommenced. It was carried through this time by monks from the Isle of Iona, who, as an offshoot of the Irish Church, followed the same fifth century rule for calculating Easter as did the British Church. By the middle of the seventh century, however, it could no longer be called a Celtic cycle, for several bishops in the south of Ireland had already conformed to the latest calculations of Rome,[2] and the Irish settlements on the Continent had also, but reluctantly, given up their particularism. However, S. Aidan, who leaving Iona formed a monastery at Lindisfarne, an island off the Northumbrian coast, and who became the king's bishop for that people, followed the older rule and his successors maintained it. Under King Oswy the

[1] H.E., III, 1.
[2] H.E., III, 3.

power of this northern kingdom had greatly increased. He had conquered the people immediately south of the Humber, and for three years had been overlord of a kingdom south of the Trent.[1] Through him, too, these peoples had been converted and it seems probable that they also followed the Irish usage. After the work of Bishop Cedd the same was true of the kingdom immediately north of the mouth of the Thames.[2] But the later calculation did not lack champions at Oswy's court. There was still alive one of the Canterbury missionaries of the first conversion. There were other priests who came from Canterbury with Oswy's queen, for she had been for a time an exile in Kent. The question became a palace quarrel, since the one party was observing the austerities of Lent while the other was celebrating the joys of Easter.

Oswy the king was a great warrior and, in a barbarian way, something of a statesman. He had delivered his country from its enemies, had extended his own authority and made alliances by royal marriages. If he had wished to assert an opposition to the power of Kent, if he had wished to ally with the British kingdom, he could have used the opportunity of this Easter quarrel. In the year 664 A.D. he summoned a conference of the two parties at Whitby. His own bishop,

[1] H.E., III, 24.
[2] H.E., III, 22.

Colman, the successor of Aidan, was accorded the place of honour, and was supported by Bishop Cedd, who had recently reconverted the East Saxons, and by the Abbess Hilda, a royal personage, the head of the abbey where the meeting took place. On the other side were not only the queen's priests, but also an itinerant bishop from Gaul and a priest recently ordained named Wilfrid, who were both friends of the king's son, Alchfrid, the ruler under his father of Deira, the southern portion of the Northumbrian lands. Colman, who spoke first, claimed for his system the traditions of his predecessors, and asserted it to be justly based on the teaching of S. John the Evangelist. When the king called on Agilberct, the itinerant bishop, to reply, the latter put forward the priest whom he had but recently ordained. Wilfrid's argument was twofold. He first pointed out that his side were supported by all the churches of the world outside a section of Britain and Ireland; secondly, he tried to give an historical explanation for the authority of S. John the Evangelist which Colman had claimed. The latter then urged that he was following the practice of Columba, an undoubted saint. Wilfrid in his final answer urged that the saints would certainly have obeyed the instructions of the apostolic see and the universal Church, if it had come to their ears. As a peroration he reminded Colman that it was certainly a sin to despise the decisions of the apostolic see once they

were known, for there could be no authority above his to whom Christ said, "I will give to you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." So far the debate had been conducted with strict regard for theological niceties: Wilfrid's argument was the duty of obeying a disciplinary decree, his accusation was that his opponents were running the danger of contempt for the authority of the apostolic see. At this point the king took part in the debate, and Wilfrid's earliest biographer, who was also one of his monks, says that the king did so with amusement. As a layman he wanted to solve the ecclesiastical knot with an instrument not intended for the purpose. He settled the disciplinary question by a dogma which all admitted. He asked the assembled clergy whether Our Lord had really given the power of the keys to Peter, and when this was acknowledged by Colman, Oswy added: "Then I will not go against Peter lest he shut me out of the Kingdom of Heaven."

Colman may well have thought that such a solution was unjust. Indeed it was giving the Easter quarrel an importance far greater than that given it by Rome for, even three years later, Pope Vitalian spoke of it merely as a "holy rule"[1] and treated it as distinct from the "true and apostolic faith." Nevertheless Colman accepted the king's decision as final and, being unwilling to conform personally, went back to Iona with those of his

[1] H.E., III, 29.

clergy and monks who thought as he did. The other leaders on his side, however, adopted the Roman usage without difficulty. Indeed it would seem that there was already a considerable party in favour of the change for Oswy found a Celtic bishop, Tuda, who had been trained in southern Ireland in the Roman custom, and who, though a monk of Lindisfarne, seems to have observed it even before the synod of Whitby,[1] and it was to him that Oswy entrusted the episcopal direction of his people. At Lindisfarne itself Colman, at the king's request, left one of the pupils of Aidan, Eata by name, who also was willing to follow the Roman practice. It is clear then that the quarrel before Whitby was not strictly one between the Celtic and Roman groups, for many of the Celts were but half-hearted in support of their bishop, and he himself was clearly not specially bitter to those who opposed him. The facts of the synod of Whitby do not then suppose that Wilfrid, though the spokesman of the Canterbury party, was attempting to drive out the Celtic clergy, from whom as a boy at Lindisfarne he had received his education.

This young man (he was thirty years old at the time of the synod) was the son of a noble of Deiri, the southern race of the two who formed the kingdom of Northumbria. There was a long standing quarrel between his people and the

[1] H.E., III, 26.

Bernicii who dwelt north of them, and although a strong ruler often managed to govern both, appointing a sub-king for the Deiri, the occasion of defeat in war was always seized on to separate the two peoples. When Wilfrid was thirteen Oswy had recently reunited them by defeating and killing the King of the Deiri, and then marrying his daughter. Wilfrid was sent to the court of the new queen, and by her he was sent to the monastery at Lindisfarne to be educated by Bishop Aidan. On the death of the latter he desired to go to Rome to study further the institutions of the Church to which he had some thought of dedicating his life. The queen sent him to the King of Kent that he might have an opportunity of carrying out his wish, and in the year 653 A.D. he set out for Rome with Benedict Biscop, another Northumbrian, but some years older than himself. The two young men stayed some time at the court of the bishop of Lyons, but Benedict Biscop, already becoming remarked for the austerity of his life, wanted to push on at once, and a quarrel of some sort resulted. Wilfrid accordingly stayed for a year with the bishop. Probably at this time Wilfrid succeeded to the lands of his father for, from now onwards, most of the incidents of his life presuppose the possession of considerable wealth. At any rate the bishop of Lyons thought of him as a suitable match for his niece, intending that he should become a secular ruler in the

district. Wilfrid's biographer, Stephen, gives as the reason of the episcopal proposal that Wilfrid was exceedingly handsome and courtly in manner; this may have been the case, but it is at least unlikely that a prudent bishop would have chosen an altogether impecunious stranger, however handsome, to maintain the prestige of his family. The incident forced the young man to a decision and he chose to devote himself to the service of the Church. He continued his journey to Rome (perhaps also to avoid the charms of the fairy princess), and spent a year in studying theology and the discipline and practice of the Roman Church, under the direction of the archdeacon of the apostolic see. The bishop of Lyons bore him no ill-will for this choice but altered the proposal to one of succeeding him in the see of Lyons, to which Wilfrid returned after his year in Rome.

Two years later a quarrel between the bishop and the secular authority resulted in the execution of the former and Wilfrid himself was only spared as being a foreigner. He returned then to England and became the friend of Alchfrid, the son of Oswy, by whom he was given sufficient land and dependents at Ripon to maintain a monastery. There was already in existence here a group of Celtic monks following the calendar of the Irish Church. These preferred to leave rather than adopt the usages of Rome on which Wilfrid

insisted, so that from this year onwards (661 A.D.) the latter must have been known as a supporter of the Canterbury party which centred round the Queen of the Northumbrian court. Still he was known far more as the friend of Alchfrid, and it was at the wish of the latter, who wanted him to be his own priest and teacher,[1] that Agilberct ordained him priest shortly before the synod of Whitby.

Tuda, whom King Oswy named as bishop of his people after Colman returned to Scotland, only lived a short time after his consecration. On his death Alchfrid, the sub-king of Deira, wanted Wilfrid to succeed at least as bishop for his own people, and in this he was supported by a great number of nobles and clerics.[2] Wilfrid accepted the appointment but asked leave to seek consecration abroad, on the ground that Rome would not acknowledge the validity of consecration at the hand of schismatical bishops, or of those who had communicated with schismatics.[3] There is no reason to question the truth of the biographer's statement on this point, but there is serious ground for doubting whether it expresses Wilfrid's real objection. It is possible, of course, that he believed that schismatics could not confer valid orders since the question had never been settled authoritatively;

[1] H.E., V, 19.
[2] H.E., III, 28; Steph., 11.
[3] Steph., 12.

but the curious thing is that he should appeal to the practice of the apostolic see, for Rome alone had always in practice been on the side of allowing the validity. Wilfrid, however, had only spent a year in Rome and may have been merely mistaken on the point. There is a second difficulty about this statement of the biographer. At the synod of Whitby Wilfrid did not once accuse his opponents of schism; at the worst he warned them that they ran the risk of it, if they persisted in refusing obedience to Rome's decrees after his lucid exposition of them. Such a statement was to be expected from one who, alone amongst those present, had received a training in Rome, for it was very typical indeed of the attitude of the apostolic see. But now after the question has been settled, after the clergy of Northumbria have submitted to the Roman custom and thereby put away all danger of schism, now is the time when Wilfrid brings forward the accusation of schism or communicating with schism. But there is a greater difficulty still. Wilfrid sought leave to be ordained abroad, although he knew perfectly well that the bishops of Canterbury and Rochester were in full communion with Rome, and although he had himself been supported at Whitby by priests who belonged to the Church of Canterbury. It is true that, at this time, Archbishop Deusdedit may have been already dead, but the news had certainly not yet reached the northern kingdom, nor did so till

after Wilfrid had set out for the Continent.[1] It looks then as though Wilfrid was endeavouring to destroy that appearance of filiation to the see of Canterbury which may have arisen from the fact that he spoke for it at Whitby; and in order to effect his purpose he exaggerated the sternness of the apostolic see, and exaggerated also the ecclesiastical censure which his now repentant opponents had incurred; but such exaggerations are not unknown in, or rather after, ecclesiastical controversy.

Wilfrid's behaviour may have been determined in part by the attitude of Oswy. The king was not a partner to his son's choice, but sent off his own priest Chad—brother of the bishop of the East Saxons—to Canterbury to be ordained bishop for the Northumbrians. It seems probable that Alchfrid was anxious to obtain Wilfrid as a bishop for Deira alone, and that Oswy wanted to maintain the union of the two peoples of his kingdom by keeping them under a single bishop of his own court, as they had been under Colman and Tuda. And the palace quarrel between Alchfrid and his father went even further. From the time of Whitby Oswy identified himself wholly with the Canterbury party of his queen. He was associated with the King of Kent in selecting an archbishop of Canterbury[2] for the race of the

[1] H.E., III, 28.
[2] H.E., IV, 1.

Angles; he caused his bishops to accept the authority of the archbishop finally appointed. On the other hand Alchfrid, supported by the old Celtic party—the quartodecimans of Wilfrid's biographer—revolted unsuccessfully against his father.[1] Wilfrid, if his Roman training had had any effect, could not be a party to involving the organization of the Church in a palace squabble. His exaggerated vehemence against the old Celtic party is explicable by the necessity of separating himself from Alchfrid, who was now making use of them for political reasons. His avoidance of Canterbury again is explicable by the necessity of separating himself from the political party of Oswy. And there may have been a further reason of tribal tradition. Henceforth Wilfrid's endeavour was to obtain from the apostolic see an acknowledgment that the authority of Canterbury was limited, and before the council of Rome he described himself as bishop of Saxony.[2] Bede on the other hand, an admirer of Oswy and Theodore, persistently describes the archbishop of Canterbury as archbishop of the Church of the Angles.[3] It is possible that under these titles is buried a tribal quarrel which both Bede and Stephen thought unedifying and passed over without explanation.

[1] H.E., III, 14.
[2] Steph., 30.
[3] H.E., IV, 2, and V. 8.

Whether this be so or not any bishop imbued with the traditions of Rome must have disliked the power which King Oswy exercised over the Church in his lands. It had been shown already in the mission which he gave to Cedd, and it was shown again when, apparently by his own authority, he appointed Chad to the Church of the Northumbrians, ignoring altogether the previous appointment of Wilfrid. When the latter returned from his consecration two years later he found Chad in succession, and apparently without protest settled down immediately as abbot of his old monastery of Ripon. It is a very curious incident in view of the vigorous and even obstinate character which he showed in later life. It is as though he wanted to avoid an open quarrel with the royal house. Possibly and even probably he was conscious that at present there seemed to be no alternative to this royal patronage. It had always been so ever since the reconversion of the Northumbrians under Oswald; his, Wilfrid's, own appointment was largely due to the wish of the assistant King Alchfrid; a man might then be conscious of the dangers of the system and yet not see how to effect a remedy. One is tempted even to think that Wilfrid's long delay in returning from Compiègne, where he had been consecrated, was due to a reluctance to enter on a struggle for which he had no authority. At least the delay requires explanation, for the

incident of his wreck on the Sussex coast is not sufficient to account for it. Once back he settled down to his monastery and spent the next three years in teaching the Benedictine rule[1] to his monks. He introduced, however, a considerable modification of the system known on the Continent, for his abbeys—he appears to have founded one or two daughter houses even during this period—were not entirely self-governing but remained subject to his supreme control. Though each was ruled by an *abbas* the same title was conceded also to several monks who assisted Wilfrid in his task of government, and Stephen speaks of this organization as being in some ways the distinguishing mark of Wilfrid's foundations.[2] Besides ruling his monastery Wilfrid acted as itinerant bishop for the kingdom of Mercia, and even for Kent which had lost its archbishop, Deusdedit. In this he was but continuing a tradition to which as a boy at Lindisfarne he must have been well accustomed, for it was a common feature of the organization which derived from Ireland in the sixth and seventh centuries.

There is, then, some reason to think that, though Wilfrid had been an ardent protagonist of the Roman usage at Whitby, he was in other matters at this time still an adherent of many customs which he had learnt at Lindisfarne.

[1] Steph., 14, 47.
[2] Steph., 49, 64.

At least he did not endeavour at this time, as he also had no commission, to effect a change in the relations of the Church and the kings, although he must have realized that the system which obtained was far from that normally approved by the Roman see. The situation was indeed a delicate one, for the peril of a relapse into Paganism was not out of the question. The papacy itself was ill informed on many matters connected with Britain; some years before Pope Honorius had believed the work of conversion to have penetrated much further than was the case, while he also believed that those who inhabited the extreme west, where in fact the ancient British Church still flourished, were heathens.[1] After the death of Archbishop Deusdedit, Oswy of the Northumbrians and Egbert of Kent sent their candidate to Rome to be consecrated, and the Pope Vitalian wrote to Oswy as King of the Saxons, and was evidently ignorant of the decision of the synod of Whitby.[2] Perhaps this very ignorance made Vitalian and his advisers even more anxious about England than was necessary. When Wighard, the candidate whom the kings had sent, died at Rome, the Pope did his best to find a competent successor amongst those whom he knew personally. There was considerable and perhaps natural reluctance

[1] H.E., III, 7.
[2] H.E., III, 29.

to accept a mission which meant long exile amongst a people who were believed to be still but half converted. After several refusals choice was made of a Greek monk Theodore, not yet in sacred orders, but already over sixty years of age. His chief qualification seems to have been his learning, and so little was he trusted that they sent his abbot with him, not only as a guide (the Abbot Hadrian had been as far as Gaul on previous occasions), but also to see that he did not introduce any of the heresies of which the Greeks were prolific.[1] Theodore spent several months in Gaul seeking information and advice about the people to whom he was going, and particularly from Agilberct, who had finally settled down to an episcopal charge in Paris. He came then to England fully informed about the conditions of the Church, and lost no time in asserting the authority which he had received. Indeed from first to last of his amazing old age—he ruled the Church in England for twenty-one years —he was regarded less as archbishop of Canterbury than as the special legate of the apostolic see. So he described himself in the acts of the synods which he held;[2] so Wilfrid spoke of him even when he appealed to Rome against his decisions;[3] on this ground the King of the

[1] H.E., IV, 1.
[2] H.E., IV, 5.
[3] Steph., 29, 60.

Northumbrians justified himself in maintaining Theodore's decrees.[1] Following the traditions of Rome Theodore immediately began to impose a strict and clerical discipline on bishops and priests. In some cases, as with S. Chad, he held their consecration to have been defective or invalid, and either completed it or reconsecrated them.[2] His authority was so well respected that the kings accepted the bishops whom he appointed for them, even if they belonged to other parts of the country,[3] and he was able apparently to depose a bishop who would not obey him.[4] Almost the first of his acts was to restore Wilfrid to his see of York and therefore to episcopal authority over all the people north of the Humber, and he did so apparently without consulting King Oswy.[5]

While still a young man, then, Wilfrid found himself in possession of the second see in England, and bishop of the people whose king was the most powerful in the land. Under the changes which Theodore introduced he was no longer a mere chaplain of the royal court but the ruler of all the clerics north of the Humber, disposing of the growing wealth of the Church independently of royal authority. With Theodore and Benedict

[1] Steph., 57.
[2] H.E., IV, 2. The phrase which Bede uses is susceptible of either interpretation.
[3] H.E., IV, 3.
[4] H.E., IV, 6.
[5] Steph., 15.

Biscop, who returned about this time, he shares the honour of teaching the English people to recover the art of permanent building. He restored the church of his see in stone and brought artisans from the Continent to make glass, in order, as Stephen says, that the birds might be kept out while the light could enter. But even finer work was put into the new churches at the monasteries of Ripon and Hexham. Stephen becomes eloquent over the dressed stone, the porticoes and columns, and the magnificent ceremony of dedication in the presence of two kings and their courts. And if Wilfrid knew how to build, he knew also how to teach his monks work which should remain for ever an instrument of culture. Bede and Stephen relate in different connections how he introduced the art of antiphonal singing in two choirs.[1] Wilfrid brought, too, to Ripon the method of illuminating manuscripts with gold, which distinguishes the Anglo-Saxon from the Irish and British manuscripts:[2] even if an artist would not call it an improvement, it is at least a variation.

In considering the account which the biographer gives of this ten years of Wilfrid's episcopate it is necessary to make allowance for the exaggeration of a disciple. But two points stand out from Stephen's relation of these subsequent events and, not being expressly mentioned by him, may be

[1] H.E., IV, 2; Steph., 47.
[2] Steph., 17.

regarded as accurate. The first is that Wilfrid organized his see as a group of monasteries, or rather of small cells dependent on the bigger monasteries. Only so can we account for the fact that in after years he has a great organization of monks loyal to him despite the fact that he is no longer their bishop. These monks were trained in the Benedictine rule but were organized on a system apparently of Wilfrid's own devising, which Stephen's narrative unfortunately assumes to be generally known.[1] In that organization the "abbas" and the "magister" and the "presbyter"[2] denoted a grade as well as an office, and such people were found in Wilfrid's curia. The whole organization was seemingly dedicated to S. Peter and S. Andrew,[3] and must have been efficient for it held together despite the exile of its leaders and its subjection to other ecclesiastical rulers,[4] but its very strength probably accounts for the dislike with which Wilfrid was regarded both by the Lindisfarne monks and the other clergy of the Northumbrians.[5] The second characteristic of Wilfrid's ecclesiastical rule is the amount of wealth which was administered by the monasteries of his foundation. The story of the

[1] Steph., 44, 49.
[2] Steph., 63.
[3] Steph., 67.
[4] Steph., 57.
[5] H.E., IV, 12; V, 19.

boy whose life or health was restored at Wilfrid's prayer, who was subsequently carried off by his mother but reclaimed judicially as Wilfrid's man,[1] shows that the bishop was already a great secular power. Much of this wealth (for administrative power meant the possession of territory) came probably by donations. It is possible that Wilfrid tried to reclaim all the places which had belonged to the Church in the old days of Roman Britain, for we are told by Stephen that he published a list of them at the consecration of the new church at Ripon.[2] Some of the wealth, however, was almost certainly the personal property of Wilfrid. His habit of life before administering the see of York, even before the synod of Whitby, presupposes the possession of large revenues, and, even after he was despoiled of his bishopric and monastery, he was able to travel with a large household, and was received as the equal of kings at the courts of the Continent.

As bishop of York Wilfrid was bound to form some conception of the part which he wished the Church to play in the small kingdoms of England. His biographer, however, makes no mention of any doctrine, and it is possible that Wilfrid's ideas were not very clear on the point. His activities at this time, however, give some indication of his habit of mind. On the one hand he had a high

[1] Steph., 18.
[2] Steph., 17.

conception of the duty of personal loyalty to a king, which seems to have been one of the standards of morality in these half-civilized courts. He aided Dagobert to recapture his kingdom;[1] later he did the same office for Cadwalla,[2] even though in both cases he gained no immediate advantage from the action. He wanted, too, to maintain the tribal character of the Church of each kingdom, and one of his pleas against Theodore was that assistant bishops should be appointed from the clergy of the people they were to rule.[3] At the same time he strove that the Church of the Northumbrians should be wealthy and independent of the State; he brought up the sons of the nobles; he made peace between the Northumbrians and Mercians. His ideal would seem to have been that in each kingdom the bishop should act independently of the king in the government of the Church, but that the ecclesiastical boundaries should coincide with those of the kingdoms. It is clear that in the hands of a great man like Wilfrid such an arrangement could be a means for the civilizing of the little states of England, and during his episcopate he used his office to this end. But the arrangement as certainly made the bishop the political rival of the king; if he were the less vigorous, which would be normal, the Church would return to its condition

[1] Steph., 28.
[2] Steph., 42.
[3] Steph., 30.

of dependence; if he were the greater man his success would excite the jealousy of the courtiers and probably of the king himself.

Nor were the methods of Wilfrid likely to find favour with Theodore of Canterbury. The Roman Church had never accepted the practice of appointing tribal bishops. The ecclesiastical organization was always directed to restoring the territorial episcopates based on the towns which formed the units of settled life, and for this reason Rome always wished the bishops to form households separate from the courts of the barbarian kings. So Gregory the Great had wanted Augustine to restore the ancient sees of Canterbury, London and York.[1] So Vitalian instructed Theodore to secure a separate permanent residence for himself.[2] This policy was fully understood and appreciated by Theodore. It explains his insistence that every bishop must limit his activity to his own *parochia*, i.e., to the district which was assigned to him.[3] Again, when the district round Rochester was overrun by Sexwulf of Mercia and its bishop accepted an office at the conqueror's court, Theodore immediately appointed another bishop to the diocese.[4] A further feature of this policy was the increase in the number of the bishoprics, or at least

[1] H.E., I, 29.
[2] H.E., IV, 1.
[3] H.E., IV, 5.
[4] H.E., IV, 12.

the division of the larger kingdoms into a number of independent sees to be created as the number of Christians increased in each district. Theodore apparently urged this step at the synod which was held at Hertford in 673 A.D. The normal result of such a policy would be to separate the organization of the Church from the royal courts of England. In this it would have agreed with that of Wilfrid. But unlike the latter it would have bound the bishops of the country together as belonging to one organization and would have made the individual bishop less important in his own country; even if he were a man of outstanding ability he would not be likely to become the king's rival in secular power, and even if he were a weak man the king would have less opportunity of dominating the Church, for he would still have to reckon with the combined strength of the episcopate. Either Wilfrid's policy or Theodore's plan, then, offered an immediate solution of the old danger of royal control of the Church, but Wilfrid's, which was really Celtic in character, was far more dependent on the personal vigour and ability of the bishop. Further, Wilfrid's policy presupposed the maintenance of the existing groups of kingdoms, for the episcopate was to be coterminous with the king's authority, whereas Theodore's would allow an integration of the kingdoms without disturbing the episcopal sees. And in this connection the attitude of these two

great men towards the kings is significant. Wilfrid regarded personal loyalty to an exiled monarch as a sacred duty, independent of the nature of the government which had excluded the monarch;[1] Theodore, on the other hand, was quite willing to ignore such questions provided he could secure a sound government for the Church;[2] later on he consecrated a bishop for the West Saxons, whose government the nobles had divided amongst themselves, while Wilfrid was aiding the exiled prince to recover his kingdom.

Sooner or later the two men were bound to find themselves opposed. The occasion was given by the jealousy with which the Northumbrian court (led according to Stephen by the queen) regarded Wilfrid's wealth, the multitude of his subjects, the magnificence of his household and buildings. King Egfrid (Oswy his father had died some eight years before) appealed to Theodore as having the authority of the papacy. The archbishop must almost certainly have regarded the lay jealousy as the natural result of Wilfrid's methods; it was an evil which his own policy would avoid, and it gave him an opportunity to carry out north of the Humber the reforms which he believed to be urgently necessary and according to the mind of Rome. Without hesitation he decreed the division of Wilfrid's diocese, and consecrated three Lindis-

[1] Steph., 33, 42.
[2] H.E., IV, 12.

farne monks as bishops independent of Wilfrid's authority.

As in the case of the synod of Whitby it is necessary carefully to distinguish between our judgment of the merits of Theodore's action as we should view it, and the manner in which the question was regarded by the chief participants. We are inclined to discuss the value of small episcopates, the dangers of an over-wealthy clergy or an over-powerful bishop, and the whole gamut of anti-clericalism. Such motives were possibly of importance in the case of King Egfrid, for the clerical scorn of lay envy is writ large in Stephen's narrative. But Wilfrid and Theodore regarded it as a matter of ecclesiastical authority. The archbishop believed his commission from Rome to include the power of dividing dioceses, and so he exercised it and accused Wilfrid to Rome of being a fugitive bishop because he had left the diocese assigned to him.[1] On the other hand Wilfrid did not question the superior authority of Theodore as having a mission from the Holy See, but considered that it was a limited authority and was subject to appeal. So, while acknowledging Theodore's rank, he asked the Roman synod to decide whether his diocese should be decided and begged them to appoint bishops from the clergy of the diocese And pending this appeal Wilfrid made no effort t

[1] Steph., 29.
[2] Steph., 30.

retain control of his monks or of his diocese. That most of the former remained loyal to him is assumed by Stephen as a matter of course, and is borne out by their subsequent behaviour; yet Wilfrid left them now to obey the directions of alien bishops.[1] So in their quarrel these two great bishops showed the nobles of Northumbria that, in the Catholic Church, it was possible to oppose a decision and yet not do so by force, that it was possible to respect and honour a man in authority and yet appeal against his decision, that it was possible for a subordinate to call in question the decision of his superior; and these were lessons which every barbarian must learn before he can be civilized.

III

Up to the time of this appeal Wilfrid had been a great and successful ecclesiastic. He had won a kingdom to the discipline of Rome; he had been the friend of bishops and kings; he had had command of great wealth and had become famous for the buildings and culture which he had introduced to his native country. Little is known of his personal life during that period. The loyalty of his monks indicates a man of strong character. One sentence of his biographer[2] suggests the

[1] Steph., 25.
[2] Steph., 21.

ascetic, mentioning, curiously enough, a mortification, that of standing in cold water at night, common with the Celtic monks but rare with those of the Roman tradition. He was known as a man of prayer, for Stephen tells of two miracles effected at his intercession, though in neither case is there evidence that he raised the boys in question to life, nor even that Stephen was sure that he did so, but only that he obtained a sudden and unlooked for improvement in the health of those who were unconscious.[1] But from now onwards Wilfrid was to learn how to suffer opposition, injustice, and the enmity of men. Egfrid and his queen were not able to understand the action of Theodore who merely sent proctors to defend himself before the Roman synod. They endeavoured to prevent Wilfrid's recourse to the Pope, and asked the various kings, through whose territory he must pass, to hand him over as a fugitive subject. In this case the barbarian loyalty which Wilfrid, and many another native bishop, regarded as Christian stood him in good stead. One king had recovered his throne because Wilfrid had been loyal to him in exile. He repaid his debt now that Wilfrid was in need. Another regarded the protection of the wanderer as a religious duty, and would not hear of the claims or offers of Egfrid.

The decision of the Roman synod in the year 680 A.D. vindicated Wilfrid's right of appeal. The

[1] Steph., 18, 23.

slow judicial procedure must have come as a surprise to the Englishmen of both parties after Theodore's summary methods in their own country. The cause was first examined by two bishops and then both sides were heard in full council; and the decision was that Wilfrid must choose two assistant bishops and that Theodore was to ordain them. But it was one thing to obtain a decision in Rome and another to enforce it north of the Humber. On Wilfrid's return with the decree, Egfrid declared it to be invalid, or at least illicitly obtained, and therefore not demanding obedience. He detained the bishop but prevented him from seeing his supporters, and at last for a short time imprisoned him, offering him release and a portion of his episcopate if he would say that the decree was forged or invalid.[1] A party of the Northumbrian nobles, particularly an abbess of royal blood friendly to Wilfrid, obtained his release and exile. He went first to Mercia and would have settled there had not Egfrid's influence obtained his expulsion. The same fate awaited him in Wessex to which he then retired, and in 681 A.D. only one territory in England was open to him who had been bishop of the people north of the Humber—the kingdom of the South Saxons who were still Pagans, and who had attempted to slay him years before when, returning from his consecration, he had been wrecked on their shores.

[1] Steph., 34.

Wilfrid's title to sanctity was earned by the manner in which he bore his misfortunes and this also saved the Church in England from a schism. Theodore made no attempt to interfere in the matter and, since the Roman decree was not directed to him, he was not bound to do so; he may well have contented himself with the fact that King Egfrid refused to believe it legitimately obtained. But Wilfrid does not appear to have asked for Theodore's interference. Justice was denied him, but, though he refused to accept a compromise by abandoning the decision of the Pope, he made no effort to withdraw his own monks from the obedience of the bishops who were occupying his see, nor to build up a party for himself in Northumbria. When force was used against him and he was driven out from one country, he betook himself always to the work of God in another. So on his journey to Rome he spent the winter in Frisia, rewarding his hosts by preaching the Gospel to them, a work taken up later by Willibrord.[1] So when he was exiled by King Egfrid he founded a small monastery amongst the Mercians and settled down to the life of religion.[2] So when he was driven out of Wessex he went to the South Saxons and immediately began the work of conversion.

These long journeys, made probably on horse-

[1] H.E., V, 19.
[2] Steph., 40.

back, still the ordinary method of travel for ecclesiastics,[1] with his personal servants and a small body of monks and clerics, were confined apparently to those people of whom Stephen could say that they belonged to "our race." [2] He used the phrase particularly of the South Saxons who, as Pagans, could have had no lot in the quarrels of the Lindisfarne and Canterbury groups. On the other hand Wilfrid seems to have studiously avoided the people to whom Bede regularly gives the title Angles. It may be therefore that there was some memory of an ancient tribal division already dying out, for Bede clearly wishes to call the Northumbrians Angles and these were properly Wilfrid's people. Yet this memory may have lingered sufficiently to be seized on by Stephen as one of the causes of the quarrel between the king and Wilfrid, and indeed to have been an occasion for it. With it, too, there was linked in some obscure manner the quarrel of many of the northern clergy against Canterbury. Bede persistently speaks of Theodore as being the archbishop of the Angles; Kings Egbert (of Kent) and Oswy (of Northumbria) join in asking the Pope for an archbishop for the Church of the Angles,[3] and from then onwards the association of Northumbria and Kent, or at least of Northumbria and Canter-

[1] H.E., IV, 6.
[2] Steph., 41.
[3] H.E., IV, 1.

bury, becomes very marked. It is curious, too, that the people of Kent had apparently made no effort to convert either the South Saxons or the West Saxons, and indeed Theodore seems later to have shown a respect for the bishop of the West Saxons which he did not show to the other bishops of England. With this tribal memory perhaps men associated the relics of the old quarrel between the Canterbury monks and those of the British and Celtic Churches. The decision of Whitby was sufficient to bring the latter into conformity with the decrees of Rome, but there may well have remained traditional details of organization or piety to distinguish the two groups in England. And there is nothing to make one suppose that Wilfrid was an adherent of the tradition of Canterbury. His manner of life as bishop, the few details we have of his monastic system, the one ascetical practice mentioned by his biographer, all point to Lindisfarne, the place of his education, rather than to Canterbury. If he was indeed regarded as the head of the older tradition, as the heir of the British Church and of Lindisfarne, it makes it much easier to understand why his relics, or some of them, were later brought to Glastonbury, and why his memory was always honoured there.

But for Wilfrid himself these differences of race or of ecclesiastical tradition meant little. Their traces can perhaps be found in Stephen's Life, but they are there as the sentiments of the biographer,

not of the hero. Wilfrid throughout looked to Rome and Rome could claim both traditions as her own. And being Roman Wilfrid knew that his work must always be the conversion of the heathen. He had gained experience in Frisia and applied it in Sussex. The king received him with courtesy and gave him protection in accordance with the rather fine code of honour of barbarians towards the homeless exile. In return Wilfrid preached the Christian religion. Like Augustine in Kent he insisted chiefly on Christ's promise of a future life of happiness, and the necessity of penance and baptism for those who wished to obtain it.[1] There seems to be no doubt that this was the aspect of the Catholic faith which appealed most to the Pagans and indicates, as I remarked before, the absence of such a doctrine in their own religion. In this work Wilfrid had the full approval of King Ædilhuach of the South Saxons, who had recently received baptism at the court of the King of the Mercii,[2] but seemingly had not converted either his queen or his own court, and who had possibly only accepted baptism as part of a treaty with the Mercians.[3] Still, his support was necessary for and was used by Wilfrid. Though he did not baptize by force he welcomed apparently the king's decree ordering the destruc-

[1] Steph., 41.
[2] H.E., IV, 13.
[3] *Ibid.*

tion of Pagan idols,[1] and this decree, coming after several months of Wilfrid's work, made the conversion of the remainder of the population much easier. The fact is typical indeed of the attitude of all these great missionary bishops and occurred in Kent, in Northumbria, and later in Germany under Boniface. When the king and a section of the nobles had been converted the objects of Pagan worship were destroyed, and the heathen people regarded it as a test by which they might know whether their gods were able to defend themselves. And it is a sign amongst other things of the extent to which the ancient Pagan worship regarded the rewards and sanctions of religion as being mainly of the temporal order.

Wilfrid prepared to settle in the land which he had converted. The king granted him sufficient territory and slaves to found a monastery at Selsey, and Wilfrid's rule was inaugurated there by granting the slaves (that status was seemingly common in all these barbaric kingdoms) a measure of liberty, probably raising them to the condition of the freedmen of the Church estates of the Continent. His peace, however, was soon interrupted by the invasion of Cadwalla, the prince of the West Saxons. This youth, driven out of his own country by revolted nobles, invaded Sussex and overthrew and slew its king. The history of this war between the West and South Saxons is not clear

[1] Steph., 41.

in Bede, and is suppressed, or at least omitted, by Stephen. But, either in the first attack or in a later one, Cadwalla extended his operations to the Isle of Wight, whose people were not as yet converted to the Christian faith, though it had probably already been heard of by communication with the mainland. The motive of the war, however, was not religious, for Cadwalla himself was not baptized,[1] and may even have led a heathen reaction amongst his own Christian people.[2] Nor were the Pagans fighting to defend their ancient religion, for two members of the royal house sought for and obtained baptism before being put to death by their conquerors.[3]

Sometime during this war Wilfrid met and made friends with Cadwalla. The details of the acquaintance are unfortunately lost, but for some reason or other the monk was able to influence the heathen warrior and even to impress on him a respect for Christianity. It was probably before, or possibly during, the attack on the Isle of Wight since, in heathen fashion, Cadwalla promised the God of the Christians a quarter of the plunder if he should succeed, and fulfilled his vow by handing it over to Wilfrid.[4] And it is perhaps a measure of Wilfrid's understanding and even

[1] H.E., V, 7.
[2] Steph., 42.
[3] H.E., IV, 11.
[4] H.E., IV, 14.

sympathy with the manners of barbarians, as well as of his extremely practical nature, that he accepted the gift and used it, as with Selsey, to establish estates of the Church under a kind of theocratic government.

There is just a glimpse in Stephen of Wilfrid's manner of treating this heathen warrior. He sympathized, the biographer says, with him because he was an exile and assisted him to recover his own kingdom. It is natural enough to suppose that Wilfrid was not blind to the fact that this would relieve Sussex, the land of his own asylum, of a devastating army, but it must have been more than this, for from then onwards Cadwalla regarded Wilfrid as a father. The facts lend support to what we might otherwise believe to be an exaggeration. Certainly the return of Cadwalla saw no destruction of the Christianity which had been fostered amongst his people during his absence by the consent of his rivals and the work of Theodore.[1] And the pilgrimage of Cadwalla to Rome two years later, that there he might receive baptism and embrace a life of religion, must probably be attributed to Wilfrid's influence.

[1] H.E., IV, 12.

IV

While Wilfrid had been labouring for the establishment of the Church amongst the heathen and for its progress amongst the West Saxons, Archbishop Theodore had equally devoted his energies to the further Christianization of the north and centre of the island. Not only had he imposed a stricter discipline on the clerics, but he had laboured to bring about and maintain peace between those who dwelt north and south of the Humber. He put his own theory of the relations of Church and State more and more into practice. The chance of war had caused the Lindissi (Lincolnshire) to be subject now to the Northumbrian, now to the Mercian ruler, and according to the result the government of the Church depended on the see of York or of Lichfield. Theodore consecrated a bishop for this people so that their spiritual ruler no longer changed with their temporal obedience. So, too, he divided the people north of the Humber into five episcopates, each of manageable size and none apparently having direct relations with the king. He reserved to himself the latter work, and was so far successful that he brought the long standing feud of Northumbrian Egfrid and Mercian Ethelred to an end.[1]

[1] H.E., IV, 19.

Just because both Theodore and Wilfrid thought more of the work of the Church than of securing the victory of their own policy, they had been able to keep apart for so long; and their very quarrel, driving Wilfrid to the heathen and bringing Theodore into practical authority in Northumbria, had been more fruitful for Christianity than if they had remained friends. Yet the tasks which they had chosen could not rest indefinitely separate, and the very success which each had achieved brought him nearer to the other. It is to Theodore's credit that, enjoying the greater authority, he made the first move towards reconciliation. It had been possible for him hitherto to ignore the decree which Wilfrid had obtained from Rome, for it was directed to the King of the Northumbrians, and Egfrid had refused to put it into force. The latter died in 685 A.D. and was succeeded by his brother Aldfrid (not to be confused with the half-brother Alchfrid, Wilfrid's early friend who disappeared from Northumbrian history sometime before the death of his father). Aldfrid was willing to maintain the ecclesiastical arrangements of his predecessor, and it would have been possible for Theodore to remain masterly inactive, but, if he wished to be reconciled with Wilfrid, he must at least do something to give effect to Rome's decree. He chose the latter course and, about the year 686 A.D., Wilfrid met Theodore and Erconwald, the bishop

of London, in the latter city. Wilfrid apparently was willing to accept a partial restoration of his property, but he insisted that the papal decree must otherwise be put into force, and that the reconciliation must be announced to the kings of the Mercians and the Northumbrians.[1]

Theodore readily consented and Wilfrid again became bishop of York. There may have been some misunderstanding about the terms of the reconciliation: at any rate it is clear that the question of the number of the Northumbrian dioceses and their limits was not settled. For five years the king and Wilfrid managed to find a *modus vivendi* and a final settlement was postponed.[2] It almost looks as though Theodore hoped that time would heal the disputes since it was a working arrangement. If this is the case it must have been the first instance of a typical English compromise in the history of England—and it was introduced by a Greek. Like most English compromises, too, it did not work in the long run, though Theodore died (in 690 A.D.) while success seemed still likely. The next year matters came to a head, probably because Berctwald, who succeeded Theodore, was a far less able man and unable to exercise sufficient influence either on the king or on Wilfrid. The latter complained that some of the territory belonging to his cathedral church

[1] Steph., 43.
[2] Cf. H.E., V, 19 and Steph., 44.

had not been restored, that his monastic foundation at Ripon had been turned into a bishopric, and that the ecclesiastical statutes decreed during his absence were still in force and had not been withdrawn. The king, with the consent of the other bishops north of the Humber, sent him into exile, and he retired to Mercia and exercised his episcopal office there. It is, I think, typical of Wilfrid's attitude that he made no appeal to the Pope at this time. There was no question of ecclesiastical jurisdiction since he had not been sentenced by an ecclesiastical superior; the papal decree of 680 A.D. was still valid against the king, but if he refused to obey it he was not more likely to obey another; the decrees to which Wilfrid objected had been made legitimately by Theodore, probably in a provincial council, and their alteration should have been effected in another. So Wilfrid quietly retired to Mercia, and devoted himself to building up his monastic foundations and to supplying missionaries for Frisia, for which he consecrated the first bishop in 693 A.D.

The importance of Theodore's work in the ecclesiastical organization of Britain can be gauged from the fact that the exile of a bishop by the king was intolerable to the rest of the episcopate. Not many years before it had been the common lot of many bishops; now efforts were made at once to obtain a solution and after five years a council was convened to give a definite sentence. According

to Stephen, the plan of Wilfrid's opponents was to extract from him a promise to abide by the settlement they made, and then to decree him deposed from his bishopric. The king wanted to settle the matter by force; the bishops were unwilling so to treat a man of such illustrious character.[1] All this is likely enough, though there may have been no malice in any of the suggestions, for the use of force would occur naturally to Aldfrid, and the bishops wanted to bring an impossible situation to an end. Wilfrid apparently thought that the question to be settled was merely that of the properties and the use of Ripon; accordingly he first promised to accept such decrees as the council made. But, when a Northumbrian noble, slipping in disguise from the king's quarters, told him the plan of his opponents, he recalled that promise. The only account we possess of the council gives us but little idea of the debate, and none of the specific charges against Wilfrid. It may be, as I suggested earlier, that they accused him of maintaining the practices of the Celtic missionaries against the new statutes made by Canterbury, and, if this were the case, it would lend point to his reported declaration: "I have been a bishop nigh on forty years; I was the protagonist against the Scots. I was the first to teach antiphonal singing and the Benedictine rule north of the Humber." Whether this guess

[1] Steph., 47.

is right or not it is clear that Wilfrid's supporters and opponents regarded him chiefly as the head of a well-organized group of monks and monasteries. The council decreed that Wilfrid must return to Ripon as abbot and abbot only, and, when Wilfrid refused to accept the decision and appealed to Rome, all those who belonged to what Stephen called "our communion" were treated as schismatics by the rest of the bishops of England.

The trial before Pope John in 704 A.D. followed a course very similar to that of a quarter of a century earlier. Again the Englishmen were obviously surprised at the careful juridical nature of the proceedings of the Greek-speaking ecclesiastics of the apostolic see.[1] Still more were they surprised when the matter was settled by producing the records of the earlier council.[2] Wilfrid's complaint on this occasion was more moderately worded than the general account of his biographer would lead one to expect. Indeed it must be remembered that the intransigeance of the bishop, which has been remarked by all recent historians, may be purely a creation of Stephen. In the pleas before the Pope, where he copies Wilfrid's own words, there is a reasonableness which makes it easier to understand the regard in which he was evidently held. The decision of Rome was in his favour and, this time, not only was a letter written

[1] Steph., 49-52.
[2] Steph., 52.

to the king but a command was sent to Berctwald —whom Wilfrid always referred to with respect as the envoy of the Holy See and therefore as having authority in the whole of Britain—bidding him convoke a council with Wilfrid, and enforce the decision on those bishops who at present held the Northumbrian sees.

V

From the moment of this decree Wilfrid enjoyed an almost uninterrupted success. When he returned to England Berctwald submitted without question to the papal decree. The journey north was in the nature of a triumph celebrated by the monks who belonged to Wilfrid's foundations.[1] Aldfrid refused to receive him on the ground that the original condemnation had been made by a legate of the apostolic see, and by the consent of all the bishops of Wilfrid's people. The delay was of but short duration, for Aldfrid died in the following year, and after a two months' interval was succeeded by his son, a boy of eight, and the nobles immediately invited Wilfrid to resume his episcopate. Berctwald came north and the two bishops who were in possession were ordered either to submit to Wilfrid or to plead their cause at

[1] Steph., 57.

Rome. Finding no support amongst the nobles they also submitted.

So for the last four years of his life Wilfrid was able to give effect to his own concept of the episcopal office. He was the guardian of the young king whom Stephen calls as his adoptive son.[1] He was the head of a group of monasteries scattered throughout Northumbria, Mercia, Sussex, and probably Wessex. The wealth of this organization in land and treasure was great, and its title to them unquestioned; its organization was firm, and Wilfrid's authority acknowledged by all.[2] It is little wonder that his biographer speaks of him as though he were some patriarch of the Old Testament, ruling a people within a people, regarded as the spiritual father of a whole race. Yet with it all Wilfrid was now weary of the burden which the bishop's office seemed to him to be. He was seventy when Pope John had given sentence in his favour and he had sought permission to end his days in Rome. It was by command of the Pope that he returned to reap the success of his long striving.[3] But his body was worn out with labours and mortifications. Pope John made him give up the nightly penance of water.[4] At Meaux on the journey home he was

[1] Steph., 59.
[2] Steph., 61, 62.
[3] Steph., 55.
[4] Steph., 21.

at the point of death. Two years later (707 A.D.) his illness returned and his monks begged him to pray for health lest their order should be left without a head. In 709 A.D. he arranged for future government of his monasteries, and made a tour of them dividing the treasure and the lands which were his amongst the different houses. He disposed a third of the treasure to the poor that they might pray for his soul, and bade the monks of his curia bring back his body to Ripon. Death overtook him at Oundle in the year 710 A.D. at the age of seventy-six.

It would seem that his life was a failure. His monastic organization linking the different houses under one supreme abbot perished so entirely that we can only guess at its details by the chance references of his biographer, to whom it was a living thing. His ideal of the bishop-monk spiritual ruler of a kingdom, independent of the king and his instructor, did not survive. The smaller dioceses, the normal type of ecclesiastical organization in the west, the concept of Theodore, prevailed and indeed had to prevail if the kingdoms of England were to become a single state. Yet the use which Wilfrid made of adversity was destined to have lasting effect. Twice he appealed to Rome against the decision of the archbishop whom Rome had sent. And from the time of Wilfrid Englishmen never forgot the way to Rome, nor the practical application of papal authority.

Throughout the four hundred years of Anglo-Saxon England no archbishop of Canterbury ever claimed or exercised the practical independence which was often conceded to the metropolitans of Rheims and Mayence. He had built up a monastic system beyond the Humber, in Mercia and Sussex, and had strengthened it in Wessex. Probably he had transplanted to these the vigour of the Celtic monastery in which his boyhood was passed. And in these districts precisely the monastic movement of the next hundred years was to be strongest and best. To employ the enforced leisure of his exile, he had converted the remaining heathen of England, and the Christian faith was not again abandoned even in the time of invasion and defeat. First of Englishmen he had preached the faith to the heathen of Frisia and he left this tradition to his monasteries; from the west country Boniface was to go out on the same mission, and from it to be the apostle of Germany; and after Boniface there came a stream of monks and nuns willing to accept an earthly exile to extend the frontiers of the kingdom of God.

NOTE

The chief source for the life of S. Wilfrid is the *Vita Wilfridi I Episcopi Eboracensis* by his disciple and monk, Stephen. The venerable Bede made use of this life in his *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum,* but gives one or two details concerning Wilfrid derived from some other source. Of good modern accounts the preface to Stephen's *Vita* in M.G.H. *Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum VI* by Dr. Levison is better than the account by Dr. Hunt in D.N.B.

Since Eadmer used Stephen's life in the eleventh century, historians have usually identified the author with the monk, Stephen Eddi, whom Wilfrid brought from Canterbury to Ripon as singing master.[1] Following Dr. Hahn,[2] I am inclined to reject this identification on account of the manner in which the *Vita* mentions Eddi, and on account of the manner in which the author seems to identify himself by birth with a people racially opposed to Canterbury.

[1] Steph., 14.
[2] *Bonifaz und Lul*, p. 68 n.

I have concluded that Wilfrid was born in Deira on account of his association in early life with those who represented the southern part of the Northumbrian kingdom.

I have insisted rather strongly on the racial element in many of the quarrels of Wilfrid's life, and on the points in which he seems to have continued Celtic traditions, because these two features of his career are not usually noticed. They do seem to me to explain much that is otherwise irrational in the story told by Bede. If I am right Bede's vehemence against Celtic customs (other than the Easter question) had a much more recent application than he would perhaps lead us to suppose. I do not, of course, suggest that he has falsified his narrative, but he would almost unconsciously, and in all honesty, pass over the details of a quarrel which he considered really scandalous in the same way as a modern historian would unconsciously and in all honesty pass over all evidence of the miraculous, however good it might be. As for the tribal quarrel, even if it existed seriously in the time of Wilfrid, it must have been almost too ancient to understand in the next generation, when Bede wrote his history.

S. BONIFACE

I

At the close of the seventh century Christendom would have seemed to an impartial onlooker to have but a poor prospect of survival. The armed forces of a new, vigorous, and militant religion had captured one of its largest and fairest provinces when the Mahommedan armies had destroyed Christian Africa.[1] In the year 711 A.D. traitors summoned these armies to Spain, and within a few years only a tiny Christian kingdom was left in one corner of the peninsula. Ten years later they were fighting in Aquitaine and pushing on to the very heart of Gaul. The mastery of the Mediterranean was passing into their hands, and Rome, the centre of Christendom, was soon to know their attacks.

At the moment, however, this was not the most pressing of the dangers which the bishops of Rome had to face. In the north of Italy the Lombards

[1] C.M.H., ii, 369 *sqq.*

had formed for themselves duchies independent of the authority of the Byzantine emperor and of his exarch at Ravenna. In the middle of the seventh century their conversion from Paganism and Arianism had been completed, so that they were no longer enemies to Christendom. But they never abandoned their desire to conquer Italy, and in consequence the duchy of Rome was constantly liable to their attacks. Nominally the centre and south of Italy were still under the direct rule of the emperor, and his official, the exarch of Ravenna, was responsible for their defence. The imperial forces, however, had failed either to crush the Lombards, or to make a definitive peace with them. The people of the Roman duchy were crushed between the heavy taxation of their Byzantine rulers and the dangers of Lombard invasion. It fell, then, to the Popes, whose estates formed practically a province, to protect and therefore, in large measure, to govern this people. But their task was doubly difficult since on the one hand the emperor viewed with suspicion all treaties made with the Lombards, and on the other the Lombards were not organized as a single state, nor had any such conception, and did not share the Roman belief in the sanctity of treaties. Throughout the latter half of the seventh century, therefore, the papacy passed from one makeshift peace to another. Denied continuous support by Byzantium, enjoying but precarious respect from

the Lombards, the Popes were constantly engaged in averting immediate dangers, and had neither leisure nor means to provide for a really stable government or for tranquillity.

The labours of the Popes to save Italy undoubtedly contributed to the political power which they later enjoyed. The gratitude of their spiritual subjects transferred to them a temporal allegiance which nominally belonged to the emperor. Indeed, a striking incident, of the very end of the seventh century, may be taken as a symbol of this evolution. In the year 694 A.D. the emperor Justinian II sent a military mission, armed with his authority, to seize Pope Sergius and bring him by force to Constantinople. Not only the people of Rome, but even the armies stationed on the Adriatic coasts, marched to Rome to defend the person of the Vicar of Christ. The leader of the imperial mission was saved from death only by the authority of the man whom he came to arrest.

This incident, however, illustrates more than the fact of the increasing political independence of the papacy. The anger of Justinian II had been aroused because the Pope had refused to give to the decrees of a council held at Constantinople the weight of his authority. By the emperor's will the bishops there assembled had made various disciplinary rules for the clergy, and had defined the eminence of the bishop of

the imperial city. It wanted but the word of approval of the bishop of Rome for such decrees to be binding on the faithful, and this the bishop of Rome refused to give. Again, then, the emperors were attempting, as they had done in the fourth century, to extract by force from the papacy decisions on matters which belonged to the spiritual power. Again the emperors were attempting to enforce their own ideas of Christian doctrine and discipline on the Church which claimed divine authority. Again the emperor was being saluted as teacher of the orthodox faith, and the victory of Sergius did not put a term to these pretensions. Early in the eighth century there succeeded to the throne of Constantinople a soldier whose character had been formed in Persia under the influence probably of Judaism and Mohammedanism. This man, Leo the Isaurian, decided that the purity of the Christian faith was sullied by the use of images, pictures, and all that concrete beauty which divides Christianity externally from the religions of the desert. Against the power of the emperor Christian men rallied to the authority of the bishop of Rome, and, after a century of struggle, the sacramental use of human art was saved for Christendom. But that struggle meant that war between the Lombards and the imperial forces often had the excuse and occasion of religion; it meant that the energies of Christendom were consumed within instead of being employed against the

Mohammedan invaders; it meant that what was still the strongest political authority in Christendom was warring against the Church, and it meant for the papacy many years of toil in defending Western Europe from the armed propagation of heresy; it meant longer years of endeavour to free the Christians of the East from that yoke; it meant that the missionary activities of the papacy were necessarily forgotten in the effort to conserve the fullness of the Christian faith.

The iconoclastic heresy was stifling Christian life in the East at exactly the same time as it was perishing in Spain beneath the hoofs of the Mohammedan cavalry. Unfortunately at this time also the collective missionary effort of Christendom seemed to be coming to an end. At the beginning of the seventh century missionaries from Rome, from the Frankish kingdoms, from Ireland had poured into England, and in two generations the island had been converted, despite the indifference and even the hostility of the surviving Christian kingdoms of the West. But that magnificent achievement had not been repeated elsewhere. After Clovis, the leader of the Franks, had been baptized in 500 A.D., a field had been opened for missionary endeavour up to the Rhine. As the sphere of Frankish influence increased it became possible to extend the work beyond that great natural boundary, through the Black Forest into the valley of the upper Danube, up to the

Thuringian forest in the north, and even into Hesse. There had not been wanting men for the task. The old Roman towns, centres of Christianity, were restored at Trier, Cologne, Mainz, Metz. The Irish monks of Columbanus and Gallus planted the faith around the shores of Lake Constanz, Teodorus and Magnus carried it to the Lech in the middle of the seventh century, Gisalric and Cunald pushed on through the gorge of the Danube almost to Vienna. But these heroic efforts, spread over two centuries, had no commensurate results. Bishoprics once founded perished, monasteries dwindled. A Christianity there was certainly in the trans-rhenane lands, but it was sullied with Paganism and superstition. The discipline of the Christian life was unknown, and men confounded Christ with Thor and the gods of the north. The barbarian rulers who were nominally Christian suffered no criticism of their ancestral habits. For such the missionary Emmerau was killed at Ratisbon in 716 A.D., and Corbinian, for a like cause, was persecuted at Freising in the opening years of the eighth century.

Many causes contributed to this failure. The Irish energy seemed to have exhausted itself with the conversion of a part of Switzerland. Those who were beyond the control of the monastery of S. Gall soon made a truce with Paganism. The work of the Irish was taken up in part by the

newly converted English, but, at the end of the seventh century, their labours could not be compared with those of their predecessors. As yet they had endeavoured but to convert the heathen Frisians in the marshes about the mouth of the Rhine. Even these efforts were sporadic, and had been abandoned time and again owing to the political difficulties and the constant wars between the Frisians and the Franks. The most important cause of the failure, however, was the decay of the Frankish kingdom. It had become the prey of an oligarchy of nobles and, as always, the members of it quarrelled amongst themselves. Sometimes the territory was divided, sometimes a competent minister achieved some sort of unity, while always the nominal Merovingian kings were mere figureheads. And in such conditions there was small chance of sustained missionary effort. A Pepin, a Charles Martel extended their powers by conquest and bargaining: the barbarians viewed the Frankish religion with hatred in the first case, while in the second they preserved their Paganism with their independence. Worse still, the condition of the Church in the Frankish dominions was declining steadily. Its revenues were seized to meet the needs of governments which rested on force of arms and not on traditional authority; its bishops were of necessity men of political government and war. Not only did they fail to carry Christianity into the lands east and

north of the Rhine, but superstition and Paganism were returning to the heart of Gaul.

Then from a monastery in the south of England came Winfrid to whom a Pope gave the name of Boniface. For forty years he laboured in those lands which form the valley of the Rhine, he pushed on into the upper valley of the Danube, he preached the Christian faith in Thuringia and beyond its forests. Where he laboured he fashioned a strong Christianity, he warred unceasingly against any taint of Paganism, he built up an organization of bishoprics and monasteries which endured throughout the Middle Ages. All this he achieved in conditions no better than those in which other missionaries had worked. But he did more even than this: he reformed the Frankish Churches, restored their discipline, extirpated heresy, refashioned their organization, and crowned the most powerful of their rulers as king, giving him a sacrosanct title to authority and preparing the way for the empire of Charlemagne. And at the end of his long life this man, who had begun his labours in a Christianity which seemed almost to be dying and who had made it militant and powerful, laid down his authority and office that he might go and preach the faith to the Frisians who were still refusing to abandon Paganism.

II

Boniface has commanded the admiration of men of all ages. He was canonized by the English within a few years of his death.[1] In the eleventh century men asked a great and learned Pope to write his life. Protestant historians have celebrated the Apostle of Germany, and have even tried to exaggerate the independence of his labours. Even apart from the fact that he secured the triumph of Christianity over Paganism, men of to-day can easily admire in Boniface the man who built up in his own lifetime an enduring organization where others had failed, and who did so at a time when his ecclesiastical superiors could give him no material help, and could not have enforced any control. The twentieth century is ready enough to admire such a one.[2] There is a picture ready made of a Napoleon of organization: it is of a man of prudent forethought, of independent judgment, of unwavering resolution, who knows his purpose and uses the means necessary thereto with decision, who, even if impatient of control, never gives his superiors the opportunity of setting aside the methods he has made his own. The type is especially admired by the English: the great

[1] Ep. Bon., 111.
[2] C.M.H. ii, 542.

empire builders, Warren Hastings, Gordon, Rhodes were such. A little indifferent, maybe, to finer considerations, broader-minded than the majority of men, necessarily rough in their dealings with others, but sure of what they wanted, certain that it is beneficial to mankind, unhesitating in carrying through the work to which they have set their hand. And they are ready to imagine that Boniface, being English, belonged also to the type.

The supposition, however, is erroneous. The achievement is there certainly; greater, if one considers the material resources, than that of Rhodes in Africa. But there is no trace of the characteristics. We still possess more than fifty of Boniface's letters and, though they are not very intimate, they do reveal something of the man's mind. And the characteristic which they betray is not strength of will but religious scruple. It is the hesitation of the *dévot* rather than the brusque decision of the pioneer which truth must chronicle. It is shown in his constant preoccupation about the validity of baptisms. In Germany he found that some had been baptized by priests who were altogether unworthy of their office and negligent in their instructions. He therefore asked Pope Gregory II whether such persons should be rebaptized. In reply the Pope reminded Boniface of the ancient doctrine and practice of the Church; the gift of grace in baptism is given in the name of the Holy

Trinity and not of the person baptizing, and does not depend, therefore, on the virtue of the latter. Boniface's sole business, he was told, was to see that such people were properly instructed.[1] Later Boniface came across cases where the priests of the heathen gods had adopted something like baptism into their sacrificial rites, and men were in doubt whether they were baptized. It would seem that the baptism was clearly not intended to be Christian; nevertheless Boniface referred the matter to Gregory's namesake and successor in the chair of Peter. He was told, of course, that such people must be rebaptized.[2] He then began to apply this ruling in a curious fashion. There were priests in Bavaria so ignorant of Latin that they used the formula "*Baptizo te in nomine Patria et Filia et spiritus sancti.*" Boniface ordered all their converts to be rebaptized. The fact was reported to Zachary who had succeeded Gregory III, and from him Boniface got a letter of expostulation, pointing out that the validity of the formula was a simple deduction from the principles which Boniface knew quite well.[3]

A better example perhaps of these scruples is to be found in Boniface's attitude to the many priests and bishops whom he found living uncanonical and even vicious lives. At his con-

[1] Ep. Bon., 26.
[2] Ep. Bon., 28.
[3] Ep. Bon., 68.

secration the Pope had bade him and bound him by oath to do all he could to reform them, and to reject their communion if they would not obey. On his arrival in the place of his mission Boniface soon found that he could not exhort the peccant clergy unless he met them socially, and that his work amongst them was not likely to be fruitful unless he kept up some intercourse with them, at least to the extent of dining with them. He referred his problem of conscience to Gregory II and received a very reasonable, matter-of-fact answer. He must never, of course, consent to their evil ways, but he must employ the best means to make them better. "It often happens," wrote the Pope, "that the rod of discipline will make men slow to understand the rules of righteousness, while they can be brought to the way of justice by the insistence of their companions or by a gentle warning."[1] This was in the year 724 A.D. and Boniface was still somewhat new to the work of a bishop. But after nearly twenty years of experience the same scruple was worrying him. The business of the Church was taking him frequently to the court of the ruler of the Franks, and there again he found priests who were leading lives contrary to the ecclesiastical canons, and in some cases contrary to the Ten Commandments. It was easy for him to avoid attending Mass celebrated by them, but it was impossible to secure

[1] Ep. Bon., 26.

the help of the Frankish rulers without coming into social contact with his priests. In his distress of mind Boniface wrote to his old friend and adviser, Bishop Daniel of Winchester, to give him counsel.[1] He had, he pointed out, sworn at the time of his ordination that if he could not convert evil-living priests he would withdraw from their communion. Yet now it was absolutely necessary for him occasionally to attend the Frankish court; and there he would meet many priests of evil lives. Like all who suffer with scruples Boniface made great play of his obligation, but omitted all mention of the humane and authoritative interpretation already given to him by Gregory II. Fortunately, however, Daniel was a man of practical common sense. He reminded Boniface that there would always be evil-doers in the Church of God, and that it was impossible to convert them except by meeting them. He reminded him further that all the doctors of the Church, from S. Paul downwards, had recognized the existence of such situations as he met at the Frankish court, and advised him therefore to ignore his scruples, though not to remit such efforts as could be made for the conversion of the peccant clergy.[2]

The sane advice of his friend did not give Boniface complete peace of mind. A few years

[1] Ep. Bon., 63.
[2] Ep. Bon., 64.

later he was writing to Archbishop Egbert of York. He had found, he said, a priest ministering alone to a whole countryside which would otherwise be Pagan, for there was no one else to take his place; but the priest, as one who some years since relapsed into public sin after penance, ought, by the rules of canon law, to be deposed from his office. Boniface in this case took the obvious line of putting the eternal salvation of a country-side in the balance against a strict adherence to the canons. But the challenging tone in which he describes his decision—" judge, then, between me and a people wandering in error "—but ill conceals the real anxiety of his soul.[1] Even in extreme age he was not able to rid himself of it. When he was almost seventy years old he wrote to Pope Zachary describing the same difficulty which he had set forth to Gregory II a quarter of a century earlier. This time he received authoritatively the same solution which the bishop of Winchester had proposed as a matter of common sense. " If on account of the needs of the Church you cannot keep from merely social intercourse with evil-doers your soul is not thereby sullied." [2]

That Boniface was timid lest he should do wrong was partly the natural outcome of his monastic education and life. As a child he had been sent by his parents to a monastery near Exeter, and he

[1] Ep. Bon., 91.
[2] Ep. Bon., 87.

learnt there such an appreciation of the religious life that, while still a youth, he received the Benedictine habit in the monastery of Nutschell, near Southampton.[1] But if to this training must be attributed some of the hesitancy with which, later, he assumed responsibility, it must also be said that he showed the virtue of religion in many other ways. It is seen in his very real reluctance to accept ecclesiastical dignity. Quite early in his missionary career he laboured with success under the guidance of the great Englishman Willibrord who, as archbishop of Utrecht, established a flourishing Christianity in Southern Frisa after the death of Rathbod, the heathen ruler of the district. Willibrord, when his term of years was drawing to a close, wished to ordain Boniface as his successor. The latter sought to evade the office by the plea of his youth—he was not yet forty years old—and, when this failed, he declared himself unable to accept a dignity which was not contained in the instructions he had received from Rome.[2]

Again towards the end of his life when he had long exercised under obedience the authority of papal legate in Germany and the archiepiscopal office, he sought to be relieved of it.[3] His request was refused by Pope Zachary and he

[1] V.B., 5, 7.
[2] V.B., 17.
[3] Ep. Bon., 80.

returned to his labours as before. It was only when he was seventy-five years old that he was able to hand over to others the care of the churches he had founded, and to betake himself, not to rest, but to the work of a simple missionary, preaching the Christian faith to a heathen people.

The same virtue of religion—the monastic spirit—informs the letters which he wrote to his friends. Men have guessed at the charm of his character, which brought Englishmen and Englishwomen from the safety of their own land to labour with Boniface and for the work of Boniface, in the forests of Thuringia, on the shores of the Danube, in constant risk of attacks from Pagans,[1] with little hope of ever seeing their native land again. Yet there is no charm, at least of this world, in the letters which are left for us to read. He asks for the prayers of his friends, he seeks especially for an exchange of prayers with monks and nuns,[2] he urges as a pledge of very special friendship that the abbot Optatus and he should offer Mass for each other's dead. There was clearly a bond, and a strong one, between this man and the many who came to work merely because of his summons, but it was a bond whose strength lay in their common devotion to the religious life. Many, and especially women, wrote to him in their sufferings. Yet he gave them no conventional comfort. In the

[1] Ep. Bon., 90.
[2] Ep. Bon., 30, 31.

sternest words of S. Paul he bade them rejoice in their tribulations and remember that in the life of contemplation men and women must be perfected in suffering.[1] In one or two of his earlier letters it is true there are to be found some trite reflections on friendship, but these sound forced and disappear as he gains experience of himself and his friends. In later years they are replaced with long quotations from the Sacred Scriptures, and always there recurs that insistent cry to carry on the work of God at any cost to themselves or to others. And yet perhaps men were delighted to receive from him a letter such as that which he wrote to Gemmulus the archdeacon: "My brother, would that I might have you near me to console me in my pilgrimage. But, since this may not be, let true charity be shown in that above all which God Himself allows and orders. 'This is My commandment that you love one another.' And therefore, in the words of James, 'Pray for one another and you shall be saved.' Let us pray for one another; and the love of God which has kept us apart on earth shall bring us to joy in the courts of heaven." [2]

A characteristic of this virtue of religion was the attitude of Boniface to the see of Rome. It was not merely the normal subjection which every Catholic, and especially every bishop, paid to the

[1] Ep. Bon., 94.
[2] Ep. Bon., 104.

see of Peter: it was rather the devotion of a monk to his abbot, conceiving himself a mere instrument of the will of Rome, a faithful and devoted slave as Boniface himself wrote to Pope Stephen,[1] a man at least twenty years younger than himself. Curiously enough Boniface did not begin his missionary career with this concept of his duties. In the year 716 A.D. he joined in one of the sporadic expeditions made by English Christianity to convert the Frisians and other heathens who dwelt on the northern boundaries of the Frankish dominions. Confusion of government in the latter, caused by the death of Pepin, the mayor of the palace, had made an opportunity for the heathen ruler, Rathbod, and Boniface (or Winfrid, as he was still called) found no better success than his predecessors. For some reason the conditions of Frisia must have suggested to his mind the need of a more authoritative commission than that of his monastery. At any rate, after a two years' return to his brethren, he started for Rome with commendatory letters from Daniel, the bishop of Winchester. Neither the early biography of Boniface[2] nor the extant letter[3] which he received from Pope Gregory II would lead anyone to suppose that the pontiff recognized the future greatness of the barbarian who came to seek the Roman

[1] Ep. Bon., 90.
[2] V.B., 14, 15.
[3] Ep. Bon., 12.

warrant to preach the Gospel. He came to Rome as a pilgrim, seeking an indulgence because of the stains of his life; he sought an audience of the Pope, and was granted it after a few days. It would seem that even here he did not follow the usual custom, for the Pope had to ask him if he bore letters commendatory from his bishop. The picture is rather that of one unaccustomed to the ordered ways of the papal government being treated in kindly wise by a busy pontiff, and, if we may trust one phrase of the biography, the scene caused Gregory II some amusement.[1] But he examined Boniface's faith and found it sufficient, and so he gave him a general commission to preach to any who were still ignorant of the Christian religion.

At this time the Englishman began to use, with Pope Gregory's approval and possibly at his command, the name of Boniface. Armed with the papal letter, which conferred of course no ecclesiastical authority properly speaking, and was indeed of a kind which the Holy See had often before granted to missionaries seeking the papal blessing, Boniface set out across Lombardy, the Alps, Bavaria, across the Danube into Thuringia. He found a people who had indeed received the elements of the Christian revelation but whose priests were often negligent of the Christian law, and whose life in consequence fell far short even

[1] V.B., 14.

of those standards which that law required.[1] The nobles of Thuringia—as with all barbarian races the society was aristocratic—received Boniface in friendly fashion, but, from the history of his later missions, it is clear that he can have achieved but little at this time. It seems very doubtful whether he remained there for more than a few months. Sometime, probably in the year 720 A.D., he heard that Rathbod, the great opponent of Christianity in Frisia, was dead. It is possible that he heard at the same time that Willibrord, his countryman, had already returned and was carrying on the work of evangelization. It would be quite consistent with Boniface's general attitude to seek a superior who might direct his labours. At any rate, during the two years which he spent in Frisia at this time, he acted merely as Willibrord's subject. Only to escape the burden of the episcopate did he recollect that he had a personal commission from the papacy, and he interpreted Gregory II's letter as a strict command to preach to the heathen and to accept no other work. So in 722 A.D. he left Frisia and, by the Rhine valley, gained the limits of the heathen world in Hesse and the borders of Saxony.[2] He had already learnt much of the missionaries' trade for he brought with him some assistants, collected others on his way, and founded a small permanent centre at Amöneburg

[1] V.B., 16.
[2] V.B., 18.

on the very confines of Christendom. In this district men had merely added the Christian name to the ancient gods, and Boniface set himself first to restore a right conception of the faith. He was successful in obtaining the conversion of the leading nobles, and when this was accomplished he pushed on into territory which was purely heathen. The earliest biographer talks of thousands being converted by this preaching: a vague term which can only be translated by our equally vague word success. As always in such cases a number of difficulties arose out of the application of Christian law to a people hitherto ignorant of Christian morals. These gave Boniface occasion to write to the Pope, reporting his success and asking for direction.[1]

It would seem doubtful whether Gregory II had expected to hear of Boniface again. Many such had sought authorization to preach from Rome, had received it and had gone forth to evangelize a small territory, had settled and died in lands still largely heathen, and Rome had heard of them no more. Had Boniface's conception of his mission been shared by the Pope it would have been natural for the latter to leave him at the great work which he had begun, to send him such assistance and direction as he sought. Gregory's answer, however, to the missioner's report was to

[1] V.B., 18, 19.

invite Boniface to report himself in person.[1] It must have seemed hard to leave a field of work already fruitful, his own creation which still needed his direction, and undertake the long journey to Rome. Nor would it have been disobedience for Boniface to write suggesting the waste of time and opportunity involved, for the papal letter was an invitation and not a command. But the Englishman was a monk and had put himself under the Holy See as under his religious superior; he put down the labour of conversion and sought to fulfil the expressed wish of his father in God.

The reception given to Boniface when he arrived in Rome was such as to confirm the suspicion that the Pope had previously forgotten about him, or had given up the hope once formed of him. It was only after several days that he was given an audience and then it consisted in an examination of his faith. It seems clear, therefore, that the Pope was on his guard against an enthusiasm which might not be according to knowledge. Boniface wisely sought leave to commit to writing the doctrine which he had taught, and so removed all doubt of his orthodoxy. Even then there was further delay, and the Pope wished to verify the statements which Boniface had sent from Hesse.[2]

But if Gregory was cautious in forming a judg-

[1] V.B., 20.
[2] V.B., 20, 21.

ment he was able equally to take decisive action. He bade Boniface accept episcopal consecration and then sent him out with authority from the Holy See to reform Christianity and to preach it everywhere east of the Rhine. This was no longer conceived in the vague terms of the letter of 719 A.D. Gregory now gave him letters to all the bishops and clergy of Christendom, to those clergy and peoples for whom he was specially ordained, to the nobles and peoples of Thuringia and Saxony. Though the word "legate" is not used in any of these, the terms of the warrant are such that Boniface was accredited with all the authority of Rome. His mission was to baptize, to teach the faith of Christ, to reform clerical life and the administration of the Church, to restore the Catholic doctrine of the apostolic see wherever men had fallen away from it.[1] And not least useful, Gregory added a letter of commendation to Charles Martel[2] who had recently secured for himself the rule of his father Pepin, a rule which extended, though not very efficiently, even into Thuringia.

[1] Ep. Bon., 17, 18, 19.
[2] Ep. Bon., 22.

III

For the next twenty years Boniface laboured in the territory assigned to him by Gregory II. It would be a mistake to imagine him as preaching to the heathen. These peoples had for the most part already heard of, and in some measure accepted Christianity. But this is liable to a very false interpretation, for the modern world seems to think that the Christian religion makes a natural appeal as being more rational than Paganism. The truth of history compels one to say that, for the Germanic peoples at least, this was not the case. They did not want to give up their ancient rites. Boniface soon found that the worship of woods and fountains, the offering of sacrifices (though not of living things), the practice of divination, charms, incantations and all the other observances of their forefathers were still in common use amongst men who had merely added some parts of Christian worship to their former religion.[1] He found, too, that Christian priests and even bishops, far removed from ecclesiastical control, sometimes tolerated and sometimes adopted the rites of Paganism.[2] It was not merely a first step in an evolution of Christianity, but a retrograde step amongst men who had been

[1] Ep. Bon., 43.
[2] Ep. Bon., 28, 63.

Christians. The religion of Christ could not maintain its control of the human spirit when men were cut off from the Church of God.

Equally false is the theory that Christianity appealed to heathen people because of the attraction of its superior morality. The statement perhaps needs expansion: there seems little doubt that the Germanic peoples, like all others, could and did give honour in theory to those who practised virginity, and were even ready to submit in wonderment to a man of pure life. But it is as certainly true that they had no natural desire to give up the easier sexual luxury of their own lives, and were quite ready to accept a priesthood which declined to their standards. The Christian priests who were still to be found in Bavaria and Thuringia had so declined, and what had no doubt been at first merely an abuse was being taught as doctrine. Some men, at any rate, said that there was no reason why a man who lived in adultery should not become a priest;[1] no man apparently maintained that high doctrine of priestly continence which Rome had never forgotten; there was none to enforce those rules about marriage by which the Church had not only built up a tremendous respect for the sacrament of the home, but had also broken up the tribal ties which were the mainspring of much Pagan worship.[2]

[1] Ep. Bon., 63.
[2] Ep. Bon., 30.

Boniface found then the relics of Christianity: little more than an adoption of the Christian mysteries of baptism and the Eucharist—neither of which as a rule was administered according to the canons of the Church—and some reverence for the person of Christ and for the Christian priesthood. Out of this he had to fashion, according to the commands of Rome, a Christianity which should be the clear-cut opponent of Paganism,[1] accepting the full discipline of the Catholic Church both for the intellect in the rule of faith, and for life in the rule of morals. And he achieved the desired result above all by insisting that the Christian religion was unique. He allowed no compromise with Paganism. Contrary to the easy generalizations of many historians it must be pointed out that this great Catholic bishop, like his predecessors in Africa in the fourth century, like Martin in Gaul, did not permit any casual Christianization of heathen ceremonies unless the change in their character was clearly recognized.[2] The men of Thuringia were not to be allowed to observe their ancient feasts under the patronage of the Christian Church.

Boniface's method of establishing this division from Paganism was peculiarly suited to the needs of the country. To the heathen and to the half-Christian the religion of Christ was represented

[1] Ep. Bon., 43.
[2] Ep. Bon., 43, 50, 51; V.B., 22.

by its priests, and these were, in all forms of religion in Germany, men to whom great official honour was paid. In virtue of the authority which Rome had given him Boniface imposed the canonical rules of the Church on all those who claimed the office of Christian priest. If they would not obey his instructions their authority was taken from them. Sometimes it is clear they submitted, often for a time they resisted him bitterly; but the authoritative nature of the Christian religion was sufficiently known for all to realize at last that only those who were acknowledged by Boniface had any title to administer the Christian mysteries on which the barbarians placed high value. Of the motives of the latter there is no evidence: we may suppose that some were attracted to Christianity merely because it was the religion of the Frankish rulers whose power was respected, at least at intervals; sometimes, no doubt, men were attracted by the external character of the Christian mysteries, sometimes by the sublime doctrines which it taught. But the long labours of Boniface were directed to one end —men could only become Christians by accepting the disciplinary yoke of the Church, both in what they believed and in what they practised. It was no easy task. Boniface had to complain, even as late as 752 A.D.,[1] of sudden attacks of Pagan bands which had destroyed thirty Christian settlements

[1] Ep. Bon., 90.

of his foundation. Frequently he had to war against hatred and calumny, directed against him by those, especially priests, whose lives called for and received his correction.[1] Above all he had to collect a body of Christians who would show by their lives the efficacy of the Christian means of grace, and would be faithful to the standards on which Boniface insisted. He sought and obtained many assistants from England, for his family was noble and he had many friends there.[2] But the temptation to temporize must have been great. He required the favour of the rulers of the English kingdoms, and it would have been easy to think that, by silence about the standards of Christian morality, more favour might have been secured. He required the goodwill of the local rulers of Thuringia and Bavaria; the life and work of other missionaries had come to an end because they had followed the example of John Baptist. Yet never at any time does Boniface appear to have ceased to preach the duties of Christian morality; at the very time when he was most in need of English help he urged the English bishops to upbraid their kings for fornication or adultery, nor did he hesitate to write in the same strain himself.[3] Above all, during these long years, he had to gain from the men who came to work with

[1] Ep. Bon., 107.
[2] Ep. Bon., 81, 105.
[3] Ep. Bon., 73, 74, 75.

him such a loyalty that they also should never accept, as their predecessors had, any compromise with Pagan standards of morality. Not the least of the glories of Boniface is that these monks and nuns—for all appear to have lived under a religious rule—did not fail him. Even at the end of his life Boniface had to write that, though their food was provided for, he had no means to secure them a sufficient income for clothing,[1] and yet there is no record of any of them returning to England in despair, or falling away from the methods of Boniface. Unfortunately neither the biography nor the letters give us any picture of his way of dealing with his disciples; we feel that there must have been a charm about the man by which he drew others to share his arduous path, but there is no evidence of it save in his success. By 738 A.D. he had founded four dioceses in Bavaria, so that the work of disentangling Christianity from Paganism was by then complete, and the same task was achieved in 741 A.D. in Thuringia.

Though it is necessary to insist that this was the great work of Boniface, his biographer, Willibald, records also a certain amount of preaching to those who had scarce even heard of Christianity. He places this immediately after Boniface's return from Rome as bishop, for the apostle proceeded at once to Hesse, there to preach

[1] Ep. Bon., 93.

to the heathen.[1] It may be that the experience of this mission taught him the necessity of first reforming the semi-Christianity of the upper Danube and Rhine valleys, but even here he must have come across many groups to whom the Christian religion was but a name. Unfortunately there exists no description of the methods he used in this work of evangelization. Those sermons which have been attributed to him are of doubtful authenticity, and in any case were not preached to heathen audiences. A letter from his friend Daniel of Winchester outlines a possible method. The good bishop would have liked Boniface to insist on the irrational character of Pagan mythology, to show them the need of believing in a supreme creator, omnipotent, the rewarder of the good and the punisher of evil men. He should show them that God has rewarded Christian men with fertile lands, vines, and olive trees, while the Pagans are left with the cold sterile north. He should show them the weight of human authority behind the Christian religion which the civilized world has accepted.[2] There is no evidence that Boniface ever accepted the advice, nor can we tell whether it was well adapted to securing its end, for it is impossible now to reconstruct with certainty the outlook of the Pagans of north Germany. The conversions that did occur were

[1] V.B., 22.
[2] Ep. Bon., 23.

in this case not due to miracles, for there is no mention of them in the biography. Only one dramatic act is there described. Boniface was apparently challenged to cut down a tree sacred to the chief heathen deity, and did so very successfully without any evil consequences. Willibald, the biographer, who knew Boniface and wrote his life at the command of his successor, makes no claim here to miraculous assistance, but attributes the success of the tree-felling to the general design of divine providence. To this act of Boniface's he attributes some at least of the conversions in Hesse.[1]

Both in evangelization and reform it was natural for Boniface the monk to put great trust in the establishment of centres of religious observance. Many of these were probably small temporary settlements for the need of a district, until the regular heirarchy of the Catholic Church could be set up. They gave, however, that example of an ascetic life, and that opportunity of Catholic worship which, if we may argue from the analogy of England, seem to have been potent factors in converting the barbarians. Only towards the end of his career did Boniface establish, and protect with papal privileges, a really great foundation—the monastery of Fulda. From the letter of approval which was granted by Pope Zachary[2] we know that it was to be under the

[1] V.B., 22.
[2] Ep. Bon., 86, 87, 89.

Benedictine rule, and from Boniface's repeated instructions and letters we know that it was the work nearest his heart. All through his life he had been a student of ecclesiastical learning—his letters contain frequent demands for commentaries on the Old Testament—and it is likely that he wished to found at Fulda a centre of Christian learning free from the demands of practical-minded bishops.

IV

Even in the first years of exercising papal authority east of the Rhine Boniface had realized the necessity of the support of Charles Martel, the ruler of the Frankish kingdoms. A sentence or two in one of his later letters to Bishop Daniel sums up admirably his relations with the political ruler. "I cannot rule this people nor defend the priests and deacons, the monks and nuns of God without the patronage of the ruler of the Franks. Nor am I strong enough to forbid the rites and ceremonies of Pagan idolaters unless men fear his commands." [1] This complaint, for so the context shows it to be, had been made by Boniface before and was to be made again, and some have supposed that the great missionary regretted the fact that he had to use and rely on temporal support. I

[1] Ep. Bon., 63.

can find no evidence in the letters that his sentiments were of that order. Every disciplinary act which Boniface enforced shows him to have loved God with all his might as well as with all his heart, and it seems unlikely that he would have hesitated to use all the means which he found at his disposal, provided always, of course, that he obtained a sincere and not merely an external adherence to Christianity. The gist of Boniface's lament is explained by himself: he regretted the necessity of being associated with Charles Martel because it might force him into a seeming tolerance of clerics who did not themselves observe the canons of the Church. This scruple, as far as it was personal, I have already mentioned; but it had another aspect, for Boniface realized that the alliance of men who were a scandal to the Christian life was also often a stumbling-block in the way of solid evangelization. Had he tacitly accepted the necessity he would have shown, perhaps, some worldly wisdom, but would have imperilled his claim to sanctity. With a wisdom of a higher order, however, he reformed the worldly power in using it. Charles Martel made use of the riches of the Church and the abilities of churchmen to defend and govern his lands; though he encouraged, and in some measure caused, the decadence of the Church west of the Rhine, he may have thought to please God by supporting Boniface in his work as a missionary. But, in actual fact,

it was Boniface who, in the end, triumphed over the evils of the Church in Frankland, and who used Charles Martel to further the work of God. His early protests against the peccant bishops seem to have gone unheeded, but he gained to his side a strong party at the court and, not least, the support of Charles's sons, Carloman and Pepin. On the death of their father in 741 A.D. they consented to the holding of Church councils in their respective territories under the guidance and direction of Boniface.[1] During the next five years three or four of these assemblies were held and the reform of the Frankish Church was in large measure accomplished by them.

It is curious to notice how Boniface's labours seem to have moved steadily back towards the heart of Christendom. He began by attempting the conversion of the Pagans in Hesse. When that work was still half completed, and while it still continued, he found it necessary to devote his energies to the re-establishment of the Christian religion in Thuringia and Bavaria, disentangling it from Pagan associations, raising the standard of Christian doctrine and morality. Then it seems as though the very needs of this task made it imperative to pursue the work of reformation in the lands south and west of the Rhine, and at the first opportunity he devoted himself (at the age of sixty or thereabouts) to this even greater task. It

[1] V.B., 29.

is as though he was constantly learning that the work of evangelization depends directly on the maintenance of strict discipline in the heart of the Church. So we find him making strenuous efforts to secure the reform of abuses in England, whence his chief lieutenants came, and even at Rome, because priests whom he suspended from office were claiming that they had obtained absolution from the Pope,[1] while others were saying that the abuses and Pagan practices which were condemned in the north were permitted in Rome.[2]

The councils held by Boniface in these years were the means by which was affected the reformation of the Church in Austrasia and Neustria (so the lands governed by Carloman and Pepin were named). But our modern conception of a council as a legislative body, expressing the decision of its members, is apt to give a false understanding of the work. Boniface would not have understood, nor tolerated, what we know as free discussion of the problems. The business of the council was to secure the carrying out of the canonical rules which were made known to them by Boniface as legate of the Holy See. In one case, at least, the principles by which they were to act, the rules they were specially to enforce, were defined beforehand by a letter from Pope Zachary;[3]

[1] Ep. Bon., 60.
[2] Ep. Bon., 51.
[3] Ep. Bon., 57.

and in all cases it is clear, from the constant reference made to Rome by Boniface, that the councils were primarily a means of making known to the assembled bishops the commands of the Pope. But though the councils of this century were chiefly a method of promulgation they were also a means by which the abuses of the local churches could be examined. Among these abuses Boniface selected as most urgent—herein, he wrote to Pope Zachary, he found his heaviest task—those which implied a falling away from the standard of the faith. He had found one Adalbert giving himself out to be an angel of God sent to preach in the form of a man with authority equal to that of the apostles.[1] The state of the Church in these lands can be judged from the fact that this man attained considerable success, so that the people complained of Boniface for taking from them a worker of great wonders, a holy apostle, a mighty preacher. Adalbert seems to have formed a sect of his own and even to have secured the adherence of a few bishops. He imposed no strict discipline on his fellows, but, claiming to know the secrets of their hearts, gave them absolution without confession or penance. So great was the honour paid him that oratories were dedicated to him as to one already canonized. Boniface drew up the accusation against him and sent it to Pope Zachary. The documents sub-

[1] Ep. Bon., 59.

mitted—proclamations made by Adalbert—amply justify Boniface's concern and still more the remark of Zachary that the man was mad.[1] But it was a madness which brought Adalbert honour and power, and wrecked the religion of his followers.

Two other heretical priests are mentioned by name in the letters of Boniface, Samson and Clement, both of them Irishmen who had fallen away from the faith.[2] The first one taught that the blessing of a bishop could make a Christian, even without baptism. It sounds like an attempt to make the Church a mere society, to deny the need of the mysteries of grace, but the reference is too short to be sure of the nature of his teaching. The second one taught that all the rules of the Mosaic law were legitimate to a Christian, and that the canons of the Church were not binding; and the particular application he made of it was that a man could marry his brother's widow.

At the request of Boniface the Pope decreed that if these heretics repented they should be deprived of their sacerdotal office, and should do long penance in monastic seclusion; if they refused they were excommunicated from the Christian Church and the bishops were bidden to carry out the sentences.[3] It is essential to a right understanding of Boniface's mind to remember that he viewed this

[1] Ep. Bon., 59.
[2] Ep. Bon., 59, 80.
[3] *Ibid.*

guardianship of the Christian faith as the chief of his tasks in these councils. Not only it is useful constantly to recall that such a conception was always the mainspring of vigorous episcopal action, but it is especially true of those who, like Boniface, were monks before all else; for such as he the Christian faith itself was precious beyond even the immediate reform of morals, and in several of his letters he traces the decay of morals to the defect of faith and to that alone.

But it is also necessary to dwell on this point because it brings out another aspect of the reforms which he effected. Such heresy-hunts recalled the bishops to their work as pastors of souls, as guardians of the faith. As magistrates of the civil state they might have been moved to reform the morals of the people, and even to stamp out the relics of Paganism : Pepin and Carloman would have urged this duty on them. But as bishops of the Church it was their chief duty to ensure the purity of doctrine, and Boniface recalled them to that task. He intended to restore the ecclesiastical character of the heirarchy, and to make it an instrument ready to the hand of the Holy See. The same conclusion can be drawn even from the disciplinary regulations of these councils. Though some of them affect laymen, the greater number are directed to enforcing a strict obedience to ecclesiastical superiors on all clerics, monks and nuns. It must be remembered that Boniface found

in the Frankish land a large body of men who, though not priests nor living in monasteries, claimed by virtue of the tonsure the name of those who were specially set aside for the service of the Church, and were eligible for appointment to her offices. On all these he imposed a strict discipline: offences against sexual morality on their part were to be punished severely; they were to be brought under the supervision of their bishops. But above all they were to be made outwardly distinguishable from layfolk, so that all men might know them and so that those exercising ecclesiastical authority or enjoying ecclesiastical privileges should form a body separate from the civil state. And in the light of this intention one can understand the reason for such a regulation as this: "A cleric who has long hair (i.e., who refuses to wear the tonsure) shall have it cut forcibly by the archdeacon." [1]

Such a reform as Boniface hoped for could not be permanent unless he arranged for constant supervision. The organization of the Catholic Church in dioceses was the natural means of obtaining it, but, as in seventh-century England and in other semi-barbarian lands, there was a strong tendency for bishops to attach themselves as chaplains to the courts of secular rulers. Like Theodore of Canterbury, Boniface set himself to remove this abuse. By agreement with Carloman

[1] M.P.L., LXXXIX, 827.

the number of bishops in attendance on the royal army (and the court was in those days usually the headquarters of an army) was limited to one, or at most two.[1] Duties of visitation were imposed on all the bishops, so that the burden of diocesan duties might keep them in their own districts, and all parishes—even those founded on the estates of the nobles—were placed directly under their control. To crown this work and secure its continuance Boniface secured the removal of some unworthy bishops and the appointment of others of his own choice. Since Rome could not efficiently exercise control over the bishops of these lands he obtained from the Pope the grant of metropolitical authority (symbolized by the pallium) to such of them as he judged most worthy.[2] The metropolitan's business was to see that the bishops of his province enforced the canons of the Church, and to hold frequent provincial synods for the promulgation of those canons and in order to watch against the growth of abuse. They were, in a sense, to exercise some part of the papal authority over their fellow-bishops, although, in the words of Pope Zachary's grant, they were to do nothing without the counsel of other bishops.

These ecclesiastical regulations undoubtedly affected civil life in an indirect manner. When Boniface arranged with Carloman the conditions

[1] M.P.L., LXXXIX, 807.
[2] Ep. Bon., 57, 58.

on which he might borrow for a time the property of the Church, and pay her during the period of the loan an annual rent,[1] the method of later imperial finance was being prepared. When Pope Zachary wrote to the bishop of Tours forbidding marriage between a man's son and god-daughter the limits of acquaintance within which marriage would usually take place were being widened.[2] Often, indeed, the effect was more direct, for the Holy See, through these councils, legislated for laymen in matrimonial and other contractual causes. The canon "An exchange not made by force or fear is as binding as a sale" was of more importance to laymen than to clerics.[3] Sometimes even there would be direct rules made about sanitation, as when Pope Zachary gave Boniface instructions to have all animals attacked by mad dogs and wolves destroyed and buried.[4] Nor was it without interest for the future of Europe when the same Pope Zachary, being asked whether tribute might be imposed on the Slavs who were settling in the Danube valley, replied that if they settled without such payment it could not be exacted afterwards.[5] And just as Boniface was ready and even anxious to co-operate with the secular

[1] M.P.L., LXXXIX, 809.
[2] M.P.L., LXXXIX, 957.
[3] M.P.L., LXXXIX, 828.
[4] Ep. Bon., 87.
[5] *Ibid.*

rulers, so he expected their aid to suppress heresy. He asked Carloman to imprison Adalbert and Clement when their heresy was proved, and he caused temporal punishments to be decreed against recalcitrant clerics. It is probable, though not certain, that as legate of the Holy See Boniface crowned Pepin when, with papal approval, he sought to add the title and sanctity of kingship to his power over the Frankish kingdoms. At any rate the legend, if it be no more, is symbolic of the truth, for Boniface inaugurated that alliance between the Church and the house of Pepin which reached its culmination when Charlemagne, Pepin's greater son, was crowned by the Pope as Emperor of the west. That Charlemagne, in his career of conquest was in a real sense the leader of the Christian armies, that he sought to modify the customs of his people by the influence of the Christian law, was in great measure the result of the work of Boniface at the court of his grandfather and father in the middle of the eighth century.

Yet it would be a mistake to see the greatest fruit of this work in the alliance of Church and State under Charlemagne. It would be nearer the truth to say that Boniface's labours saved this alliance from its greatest danger, the subjection of the Church. Throughout his career, and however great his actual influence, he kept himself and the churches which he founded or reformed wholly subject to the see of Rome. We saw how his authority arose

from a grant made by Gregory II. Boniface sought confirmation of it from his successor, another Gregory, and this time it was enlarged.[1] When first Zachary, and then Stephen, succeeded to the chair of Peter, Boniface wrote to each a profession of entire obedience. Nor was this relation merely nominal; though the Popes could perhaps have done little if Boniface chose to ignore them, they did not hesitate to treat him as their servant, nor were they disobeyed. Gregory III enlarged the authority of his legate, but he bade him not only convoke a council for the Danubian lands but be present at it himself.[2] He urged him to longer journeys and greater efforts: "Nor shall you have leave, my brother, to remain in one place because your labours have been begun there." In the time of Pope Zachary there were men who replied to Boniface's reforms that they had already obtained absolution for their crimes, and authority to exercise their office, from Rome; there were others who pleaded the example of Rome for various practices which Boniface deemed simoniacal. Such things have always been said of Rome, and Boniface, like many another good man, was afraid they might be true. He wrote in all simplicity to the Pope asking if they were true, and received not once or twice a stern letter from Zachary, indignantly

[1] Ep. Bon., 43.
[2] Ep. Bon., 45.

denying the charges, and upbraiding Boniface for allowing himself to doubt the desire and labour of the apostolic see for reform.[1]

To guard against the danger of a relapse on the part of the churches he had founded, Boniface sought permission to consecrate his successor in his own lifetime. He was a tried servant of the papacy, he was a man of over sixty years of age, but his request was now contrary to the canons of the Church, and Zachary told him plainly that such a privilege would not be conceded even to Boniface.[2] Yet it was no mean anxiety lest the legate should forget his lord; Zachary promised, "what he would grant to no one else," that, if Boniface on his death-bed should name the successor of his choice, and send him to Rome, he (Zachary) would consecrate him. And in the very letter wherein the Pope censured Boniface for seeming to believe Rome guilty of simony he enlarged his authority and gave him legatine powers in all the churches of Gaul.[3] If Zachary was not afraid to rebuke or command the greatest of his servants, he was at least not of the small-minded who mistrust honest criticism.

This habit of obedience and even filial regard for the papacy, which Boniface showed in his own life and enforced on the churches over which

[1] Ep. Bon., 58, 80.
[2] Ep. Bon., 51.
[3] Ep. Bon., 58.

his influence reached, was, I say, of supreme importance in the history of Europe. When Charlemagne's dominion extended, a quarter of a century later, from the Pyrenees to the Vistula, men knew the papacy for an authority independent of the Empire, for there was a strongly knit ecclesiastical organization to witness the supremacy of its spiritual head. But even this is only a part of the fruit of Boniface's labours. His ardent love for the Christian faith as the greatest treasure which men could find; his zeal for Christian virtue which made him denounce the sins of the flesh and the easy immorality of the barbarians; his devotion to the Church of God which made him unwearied in the formation of a clergy distinct from the laity and bearing witness to the stricter discipline of the Christian life; his obedience to the Pope as the spiritual ruler of Christian men; his labours for the revival of the Benedictine life, the more perfect way of obedience and poverty; these were the characteristics of that long life spent in the service primarily of the Church of God, but also in the service of Europe. And this virtue of religion—for it can be described in no other way—bore its fruit in the next centuries. Despite decay, and despite accidents which came from without, the churches of Gaul and Britain and Germany were strong enough to convert the Danes and Saxons, the Poles and the Slavs, with whom the temporal rulers of Europe made war, and even sometimes

despite the methods which these rulers adopted to secure that conversion.

The years of Boniface allowed him to do little more than prepare the forces of Christianity, to strengthen the fortresses, to consolidate territory in which earlier missionaries had gained a footing. After reforming the churches of Gaul he spent ten years as archbishop of Mainz, directing the work of nearly all the dioceses in the valleys of the Rhine and Danube and their tributaries. But, though he was over seventy years old, he still longed to begin the campaign for which his life work had been but the preparation. He urged the English to send over priests to commence the conversion of the Saxons;[1] he thought of this work (so one gathers from the letter of a friend of his[2]) night and day. Not only the Saxons but many still of the Frisians had not heard of the Christian faith. Boniface therefore obtained leave from Rome to abandon his archdiocese to another and to go back to the task which had been the first in his missionary life.[3] He commended to his successor the various works he was engaged on—the building of churches in Thuringia, the basilica of the monastery of Fulda; he begged that when he died, and the time could not long be delayed, his body should be taken back to rest in that

[1] Ep. Bon., 38.
[2] Ep. Bon., 15.
[3] V.B., 32, 33.

church.[1] So he started out with his companions, to work his way by boat into the marshy country north of the mouth of the Rhine. He had already earned from the Christian Church many titles to enduring fame, but the chance attack of a band of Pagans brought him the palm of martyrdom, and may serve at least as a reminder that, during the greater part of his life, he had, like a good soldier, run the risk of such a death.

[1] V.B., 33.

NOTE

The sources for the life of S. Boniface are his Letters and the *Vita S. Bonifacii*, written by the priest Willibald at the command of Lul who succeeded S. Boniface in the see of Mainz. The subsequent lives do not seem to have embodied new material of importance. Of detailed recent accounts the best seem to be those of G. Kurth,[1] and Sir E. Maunde Thompson.[2]

It is very difficult to be sure of the dating of many of the letters. Jaffé, Hahn, Ewald, and Dümmler disputed the problem at length in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. I have followed the dates assigned by the last-named, who edited the letters for the M.G.H.

Only in two points have I ventured to depart from the accounts usually given of S. Boniface. I cannot see any reason for supposing that the first commission given him by Gregory II in 719 A.D. was more than a general commendation. To suppose, as is usual, that Boniface was already almost a legate of Rome, seems to me a straining

[1] *S. Boniface* (1902).
[2] D.N.B.

of the evidence and an invention of difficulties with regard to his work under Willibrord. The phrases of these early papal letters of commendation should, in my opinion, be treated as common form.

Secondly, I fail to find in Boniface's letters those characteristics which are usually assigned, truly or otherwise, to great administrators. Though I insist on the natural timidity of his character, for which there seems to me ample evidence, I do not mean in any way to detract from his greatness; rather I think that it implies a greater sanctity than men have usually attributed to him.

S. DUNSTAN

I

When King Athelstan died in the year 939 A.D. England was united under one monarch, and the havoc caused by the Danish invasions of the latter half of the ninth century was already in full course of repair. It had been first and foremost a military task, begun by Alfred the Wessex king and carried on by his son Edward and his grandson Athelstan. Swift marches and sudden attacks had forced the Danes to make their peace at the price of promised loyalty; fortified villages held by the king's captains, who were usually also his relatives, had ensured the observance of the treaties of submission. But the creation of any sense of community was yet in the distant future; Wessex and Kent truly held by their own family of rulers, but Mercia, between the Trent and the Thames, gave its loyalty only to those who governed it immediately and governed it well. Before Athelstan's generation had passed the Mercians were to throw off for a time their obedience to the ruler

of Wessex. Northumbria's centre and capital was York, and its archbishops, the rulers of the city, were Danish and of one family throughout the tenth century. Even the memory of British civilization had not died and the Wessex kings considered themselves as in some ways its representatives; their court was more often fixed in Somerset than elsewhere, they consistently endeavoured to restore Glastonbury, the centre of British tradition, and they were careful to adopt titles reminiscent of a period before the coming of the barbarians.

Unity, such as it was, depended on the king, and with unity went justice and peace. The recovery of the country depended on the fealty which men would pay to the monarch, and so Edward, the son of Alfred, required his nobles to be in the king's fellowship, to love his friends and shun his enemies. Edmund, the brother and successor of Athelstan, required his men to swear that they would be as faithful to him as to their lord—i.e., to the one on whom they depended immediately for protection. This was a necessary condition for that recovery which Alfred had planned. The Danish wars, and perhaps still more the necessarily military character of the reconquest, had caused the decay of the ancient civilization. The country was in the hands of a comparatively few great dukes, and its peace depended on their being at peace with one another in the king's fellowship.

Still more was it true that the recovery of culture must begin from the court of the military ruler. Alfred had attempted, and to a slight extent succeeded, in restoring the teaching work of the Church. He had brought Welsh monks to his court :[1] he had appointed such learned clerks as he could find to bishoprics. His son and his grandsons continued that work as best they could. Edward had founded a new monastery at Winchester and had begun the rebuilding of the great church of Glastonbury. Athelstan had completed his father's work there and had enriched S. Cuthbert's at Durham.[2] Edmund was to settle Bath with monks from the Continent.[3] Cynath and Ælfheah, both of monastic training, were amongst Athelstan's clerks;[4] the former was sent on a mission to the Continent, the latter was made bishop of Winchester. But these efforts had not been successful in restoring the monasteries as localized centres of culture. Their lands remained in most cases in the hands of the king, who maintained a few clerks, bound by no monastic vows, to say Mass in the old church. Abingdon, Chertsey, Bath were such, and probably Glastonbury. At best a few might be found to practise monastic discipline, but, like Ælfheah and Cynath

[1] A.R., 41.
[2] A.R., 52.
[3] A.R., 62.
[4] A.R., 36.

and later Dunstan, they readily made their way to the king's court. Even at Glastonbury, where the monastic rule was best observed, the king could appoint as abbot a royal servant for whom he had no further use.[1] In other cases conditions were worse, for Oda, an upright archbishop of Canterbury of Edred's reign, could purchase the headship of a Winchester monastery for his nephew.[2] In such circumstances it was not easy to revive those habits of quiet steady activity which had made the monasticism of Bede's day the home of learning. Nor was their work continued by the clerks who now lived on the benefices with which cathedral and collegiate churches were still endowed. There was not, it is true, much serious complaint of immorality among the clergy. The services of the Church were in most cases rendered faithfully, and it was accounted a serious charge some years later that certain priests at Winchester did not celebrate the Masses which the terms of their foundation required.[3] There was not even the gross ignorance of which Alfred had complained, for the same clerks at Winchester were accused that they merely understood the words of the services according to their grammatical meaning.[4] But the clergy were not rendering the

[1] Mem., 25.
[2] A.R., 127.
[3] A.R., 114.
[4] Mem., 300.

special services to learning, nor expounding the theology and language of the Church in a way which the tradition of Christian society required of them. Nay, more, the benefices of the collegiate church were now in the hands of men who did not aspire to the priesthood. At Worcester before the Danish invasions there had been nine priests, four deacons and five assistant clerks. In the middle of the tenth century the priests were two, and there were fourteen clerks.[1] The collegiate benefices had become hereditary in some cases, and so were in the hands of the nobler families. These clerks, who did not aspire to the priesthood, appear in most cases to have been resident and maintained the necessary services of the great churches. But they engaged in the ordinary pursuits of their class, and gave themselves to hunting or commerce. It was idle to look to them to aid the recovery of culture in England.

At the time of the death of Athelstan the only agent of that great task was the royal household which was also the government of England. It led a migratory life, for no single district could long support the burden of supplying the food necessary for its residence. So the king moved from one estate to another, taking with him many of the nobles and a household of clerks who drew up his charters and administered his treasure. He had fine buildings, the chronicles tell us, at Abingdon,

[1] A.R., 126.

Winchester and elsewhere. Monastic lands had fallen to the royal treasury when monasteries had decayed. In many places the king dwelt for a few days with a wealthy subject, sending his servants beforehand to make sure of the provision for his court.[1] These kings of the Wessex house were mighty huntsmen and the royal journeys often became hunting expeditions. In all the stories men told of that time the hounds are constantly introduced as though they were the normal attendants of the royal court. One of the stories begins thus: "On a certain Sunday morning the king had gone hunting and asked Dunstan (who was then archbishop of Canterbury and had no slight conception of the dignity of the sacerdotal state) to wait Mass until his return." So the tale was told without surprise at such an action—and that king was famed for his piety.

Yet it would be a mistake to regard the court of the Wessex kings as primarily a place of entertainment. Its presence was a guarantee of peace and order. When there was likelihood of trouble or invasion it could easily be fashioned into a camp. There, too, men found justice. Wherever it was constituted a royal clerk stood in the outer room and received the petitions of those who would see the king.[2] The hall of the latter (a wooden building usually, but at this time porches of stone

[1] Mem., 17, 265.
[2] Mem., 45.

were being introduced in the chief residences as in the churches) was chiefly a place of justice. It served for meals also, but tables had to be set out for that purpose, and the banquet itself was often the occasion for business of state.

Still more the court was a centre of culture. Alfred had sought for learned men from the Irish monasteries to teach his clergy. They were still welcome at the court of his grandson, and many of them found their way to Glastonbury,[1] rich in the traditions of Christian monasticism, and now often the residence of the king. Men from foreign lands could be found at the court of Athelstan. Some were political refugees. One became in later years King of the Franks, another the Duke of Brittany.[2] Embassies came from the great European monasteries, for the English king was in touch with many of them. They brought him relics of their saints,[3] for Athelstan, warrior and lawgiver, was a great collector of relics. But by these roads culture came to England, for men must gather it from many places before they can make a store for themselves. It is not so surprising to find Athelstan making gifts of finely illuminated missals, and even of writings which preserved that knowledge of Greek the Irish brought to England in his grandfather's time.

[1] Mem., 10.
[2] A.R., 74, 83.
[3] A.R., 71.

So the king's court in the early tenth century was the chief, if not the only, place where the arts were practised. There men could hear music and could compose it. There the great ladies practised the arts which were used in making the vestments of the church. There men could learn the art of the goldsmith and the scribe.[1] But this culture could not find root in England till it had a localized permanent home. A migratory court dependent on the whim of the monarch meant an ephemeral culture. The work of civilizing England demanded the establishment of centres where men could build up a tradition of the arts. Nor could this be effected unless men learnt to venerate and desire a life wherein the ambitions of war and commerce found no place. The tenth century knew of but one solution—monasticism, which had once given such a life and still inculcated its spirit. But monasticism could not be revived by the lavish gift of the kings, nor by the employment and promotion of those few who had been trained according to the Benedictine rule. There was wanting a man who would embrace the religious life for its own sake, and would have the ability to communicate his fervour to others.

[1] Mem., 20.

II

Dunstan was one of the many talented young clerks at Athelstan's court. Like the rest he was remotely connected with the royal line, for a government originally military remains, by birth or marriage, a family affair. His relatives had fought with Edmund, king and martyr, in the great stand against the Danes nigh a hundred years before.[1] Of late there had been many clerics in this family. Kensige, bishop of Lichfield, Ælfheah, monk and royal clerk and later bishop of Winchester, Athelm, who passed from the see of Wells to that of Canterbury in King Edward's reign, were amongst them. Dunstan had been educated at Glastonbury, where a few monks still observed the Benedictine rule, and had been there still when they were rebuilding the church at the beginning of Athelstan's reign.[2] The boy's interests were scholarly, and he had known the occasional passions of piety[3] which are natural to a boy so trained. When his Uncle Athelm had succeeded to Canterbury, and had crowned King Athelstan, the lad was brought to the royal court.

[1] A.R., 41.
[2] Mem., 262.
[3] *Ibid.*

He gained some little fame as a musician and designer.[1] At this time he had received the minor orders of the Church but had no intention, seemingly, of proceeding to the priesthood. Such stories as survive of him in those days preserve the picture of a clever lad, sought after for his skill in designing and music by the older ladies whose influence both in politics and culture was always remarkable at the Wessex court.[2] He was known to be pious but not to an alarming extent: no one yet thought of him as a monk.

After his relative and patron Ælfheah left the court to become bishop of Winchester Dunstan's position became less secure. He had no important position because he had not been directly in the employ of the king. But he had made enemies of some of his companions, and they managed at last to get their accusations, whatever they were, to the royal ear, and so obtained an order that Dunstan must leave the court.[3] Probably it was a case of faction quarrelling, for Dunstan was not alone in his dismissal. The successful band were not satisfied with securing the removal of their rivals. They attacked them as they were riding away, and Dunstan was rolled in a marsh and left there. He managed to make his way to the house of one of his friends, but would not have been admitted

[1] Mem., 300.
[2] Mem., 17, 99.
[3] Mem., 11.

—he was, according to the story as he told it, a sorry sight—but for the dogs who recognized their friend despite his condition.[1]

About this time Dunstan found his consolation on the lips of a maid who was apparently a suitable party for him.[2] His own desire to wed may not have been returned: but it was sufficiently strong to make him reject Ælfheah's suggestion (Dunstan had joined his relative at Winchester) that he should become a monk and a priest. Shortly afterwards, however, he was laid up with a serious illness and, as one of his biographers remarked, his mind ran no more on matrimony.[3] But the return of health brought no change of resolve; he sent for Ælfheah and asked the bishop to make a monk of him.

It was usual enough then to be trained as a monk outside the cloister, especially if attached to the household (the family, as it was called) of a monk-bishop like Ælfheah. The latter seems to have kept Dunstan with him until the time came to ordain him priest. Then the former courtier settled down at Glastonbury. There they still preserved the traditions of the Christianity Augustine had brought to England. Paulinus and Wilfrid figured in their calendar. But they preserved also memories of that older Christianity

[1] Mem., 12.
[2] Mem., 13.
[3] Mem., 13, 260.

in which Glastonbury took its rise. Gildas the wise, who wept its downfall, was said to be buried before the High Altar. Glastonbury, too, was a shrine of the kindred Christianity of Ireland; Patrick's fame was venerated, the dust of his successor and namesake rested in the church.[1] Though the Benedictine rule was still observed by a small group, the organization of the monastery had decayed. It was more a collection of men leading the monastic life and meeting for the worship of God. Dunstan built himself a small cell there, and chose apparently—for it was not then a matter of rule—to devote much of his time to manual labour, although he still cultivated his skill at music and the arts.[2]

Of this period men told in later days the story of the devil and the tongs. One day a man, a traveller, came to Dunstan at his smithy and begged him to do a job of work for him. The monk promised readily, for such was the manual labour he had imposed on himself. While the work was toward, the stranger began to talk of the delight of women's love. Then, as a stranger would, he dropped the subject, receiving no encouragement. He could not keep off it for long, however. This time Dunstan put his tongs in the fire, waited patiently till they were red hot, and

[1] A.R., 100.
[2] Mem., 262.

then seized the stranger by the nose till he howled and fled.[1]

This story is told by authors the oldest of whom wrote a hundred years after Dunstan's death. But one of them, William of Malmesbury, certainly copied his stories from far older records, and seems in most cases to have lifted them bodily. If the accounts which exist be true to fact, Dunstan himself declared the next morning that the stranger was the devil in human form. There is no doubt that Dunstan did in other cases believe such visitations to occur, and certainly the biographers would have found no difficulty there. The story is curious, however, in that the evil one did not vanish when the saint attacked him, but shrieked and ran as any human being would have done. This is an unwonted incident in such stories, whether they be true or false, and it is likely that Dunstan would have drawn attention to it as surprising. It seems, then, more probable that, as it came from his lips, the story was of a human being inspired by the devil. Though such emendations are usually little more than hazardous guesses, there does seem some ground for suggesting it in this case.

It is not at all unlikely that the Saxons, greatly given to sins of the flesh, would find amusement in baiting one who was pledged to a life of chastity. And the reply of Dunstan was certainly typical of

[1] Mem., 263.

his character as it developed later. Decided and penal action, rather than verbal objections, seemed always to him a more effective way of correcting vice, particularly if it was a vice to which the flesh lends encouragement. The story marks, too, a characteristic on which his biographers wished strongly to insist. At this time his fame lay in the purity of his life. The man who had been bred at a Wessex court, and who had himself at one time wished for the delights of marriage, now burnt out of his life the temptations which memories must have brought him. To his countrymen it appeared a stupendous feat, and brought both men and women to seek his counsel, for these half-civilized races have always venerated the purity which was not to be found in their daily intercourse.

The fame of Dunstan brought him once more into contact with the court, and the great ones of the land in their fits of piety found it necessary to consult with the holy monk of Glastonbury. Finally it brought him riches. One of the great political ladies of the Wessex house, herself an adviser of kings, settled in her old age at Glastonbury and finally left her estates to Dunstan.[1] There was no ecclesiastical law then in force in England to prevent Dunstan from using and disposing of these lands as he willed. Too often those who had been monks ceased to be so for practical purposes. Cynath, the abbot of Evesham,

[1] Mem., 87.

living as a monastic clerk at Athelstan's court, had received grants of land from the king with power to dispose them later to his heirs.[1] But Dunstan had already learned more of the monastic spirit. He used the Lady Ethelfreda's lands, and those also which he obtained from his family, to build churches and so to endow them that they might be served by men living according to a monastic rule. So, by the time of Athelstan's death in 939 A.D., this young man Dunstan (barely thirty years old), trained as a courtier, skilled and learned above most of his fellows, had learnt the secret of monasticism, to give himself and his possessions wholly to the service of religion.

Already, however, he was known to the court, and, when Edmund succeeded his brother, Dunstan was brought out from his monastery. But men soon found that he was not content to be a mere official. He strove to set before both king and courtiers an ideal of the prince as a dispenser of justice. So earnest and rigorous was he (he saw in this the only way to the restoration of the country) that he created enemies rather than disciples.[2] At length the king, hitherto his personal friend, dismissed the monk who would not forget the theories of the cloisters. The chance of hunting later brought Edmund face to face with death, and he repented of that which he thought

[1] A.R., 36.
[2] Mem., 23, 268 *sqq*

to have been ill wrought; when he was once more in safety he did not forget to restore his favour to the monk, but he saw clearly enough that the latter would leave him no peace at court. Dunstan was made abbot of Glastonbury,[1] and Edmund knew him well enough to know that he would be a resident abbot.

III

For the next fifteen years Dunstan saw but little of court life. It is true that as abbot of Glastonbury he ranked among the lesser nobles, and so, when the court was near his abbey, his services were required. On the day Edmund was assassinated Dunstan appears to have been on duty to receive petitions in the royal antechamber.[2] His influence, no doubt, was greater during the reign of Edmund's brother and successor, Edred. Though the latter was a good ruler he was a sick man all his life, and for that reason his court probably left the west country less often. Between him and Dunstan there were close ties of friendship. The abbot became the keeper of the royal treasure, and it is one of the signs of the growing civilization of England that the king no longer had to carry his exchequer about with his body-

[1] Mem., 25, 271.
[2] Mem., 45, 276.

guard.[1] But though Dunstan's influence was great he did not reside with the court; when news came of Edred's last illness the treasure had to be packed on mules, and the abbot hurried across country with his charge so that the dying king at Winchester might dispose of it as he would.[2]

Dunstan's real work during these fifteen years, from his appointment in Edmund's reign to Edred's death in 955 A.D., lay at Glastonbury. There he began to restore the ancient splendour of the monastic buildings, turning what had been a collection of monastic cells into a splendid home for monks. The whole was surrounded by a stone wall, to the church was added a tower and aisles.[3] The new buildings were but an indication of restored organization. The freedom which Dunstan had enjoyed he did not permit to his monks. A lay procurator—Dunstan's own brother—was obtained and business with the outside world was done through him.[4] Above all, however, Dunstan trained his monks: and he trained them to have confidence in the institution to which they belonged, to love the Benedictine rule, to practise it themselves, to be able to train others after them. Ethelwold, who had been ordained with Dunstan, came to him as a monk. Later he wished,

[1] Mem., 31.
[2] Mem., 281.
[3] Mem., 25, 271.
[4] Mem., 28, 274.

apparently with Dunstan's approval and probably at his desire, to go to Burgundy or Lorraine, to learn the secrets of the great monastic revivals which had taken place in those provinces.[1] The queen-mother Edith—mother of three kings and adviser to them all, typical of the great influence of women for good or bad in the governments of the tenth century—persuaded the king to forbid the journey.[2] Instead they offered Ethelwold the means to restore the abbey at Abingdon, long since served only by a few royal clerks. Ethelwold took with him three monks from Glastonbury. In later years Ethelwold was to become bishop of Winchester, to restore it as a centre of monasticism, and to found or refound the abbeys of Peterborough and Ely. Osgar, one of the three who came with him from Glastonbury, was to succeed at Abingdon; another, Foldbricht, became abbot of Pershore; the third, Frithgar, restored the monastic life at Evesham.[3] Through these men the Christianity of England was so strengthened that it could contain and conquer the Danish victors of the end of the century. From the time of their revival monasticism did not perish in England, nor even grievously decay, till it was swept away by the barbaric folly of Henry VIII. They, perhaps, had a more direct part than Dunstan in

[1] A.R., 110.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] A.R., 88.

restoring the monastic life, but they learnt how to do it, and to do it well, from him. What neither he nor the Wessex kings had been able to do by grants of land alone, he was able to do by the years he gave to the government of Glastonbury.

It must not be supposed that Dunstan was a popular abbot in the sense we now give to that word. A man who teaches others to fashion their life to a rule must needs be somewhat rugged and maybe hard. Certainly the abbot of Glastonbury never hesitated to preach duty in order that he might leave others happy with their own way of life. But what he could enforce in his monastery only brought him trouble in the world outside. Edred was succeeded by his nephew, and the new King Edwy soon showed himself but little disposed to follow in the footsteps of his predecessors. He confiscated the lands of his grandmother Edith, resumed the grants which his uncles had made to the Church, imposed fines on the growing cities, and cared nothing for the advice of the older counsellors.[1] The latter were led by Oda, the archbishop of Canterbury, but could do nothing against the authority of the king, for traditions of justice had not yet displaced the older Germanic ideas of personal obedience to a military ruler. Most of the nobles, though disapproving, were content to see the estates of others seized by the monarch, and there was not wanting a party to

[1] Mem., 32, 283.

approve the overthrow of the stricter churchmen.[1] Dunstan, after delivering the royal treasure, returned to his abbey but was summoned with the other nobles to the king's coronation. There the king, still little more than a boy, deserted his nobles at the banquet for the company of a woman of the court, about whom scandal was already told. Oda suggested he should be brought back: the nobles found no one willing till Kensige, the bishop of Lichfield, and Dunstan, the monk, volunteered for the task. They were not sparing of their rebukes when they found the crown, consecrated symbol of royalty, on the ground, and their ruler being petted by the woman and her daughter. The crown was clapped on the king's head, a few remarks were made about the duties of kings, and Edwy was brought back to his nobles.[2]

Dunstan may have thought that his return to the abbey would save him from the king's wrath. But Edwy showed no intention of good government. Very shortly royal officers were sent to take possession of the monastic lands, or at least of those recently acquired; at Glastonbury, finding a party amongst the monks ready to revolt against Dunstan's rule,[3] they were able to expel the abbot when they confiscated the monastic property.

The king's displeasure was not a light thing in

[1] Mem., 284.
[2] Mem., 32, 283-284.
[3] Mem., 34.

Saxon times, and Dunstan wisely fled the country. Already he had heard of the reformed monasteries of Flanders, for monks from S. Bertin's at Omer, evicted because they would not submit to the reforms of Gerard of Brogne, had fled to England and been settled at Bath by King Edmund.[1] At that time Dunstan was abbot of Glastonbury, and the king had given him commission to see to the establishment of the newcomers at Bath. What he heard of the reforms at S. Bertin may have determined his choice of a place of exile. Maybe, also, he had friends in Flanders, for Duke Arnulf's mother had belonged to the Wessex royal house.[2] At any rate he received Dunstan in friendly wise and the exiled abbot lived as a monk at Ghent, where Womar, who had helped to reform S. Bertin's, was now engaged on similar work. With him Dunstan seems to have become friendly, for later, when the exile became archbishop of Canterbury, his former host visited the monasteries of England.

The misrule of Edwy did not long restrict itself to churchmen. At last the Mercian nobles revolted and set up as king Edgar, the younger brother of Edwy. In the general reversal of the recent acts of the court Dunstan was recalled and, since Glastonbury remained in Edwy's hands, he was appointed to the bishopric of Worcester. He had

[1] A.R., 138.
[2] Mem., 59.

hitherto refused episcopal rank though it had been offered him not once only by King Edred.[1] Now he seems to have acted chiefly under the guidance of Oda, the aged archbishop of Canterbury,[2] a proof that the Church retained her common life even when Mercia and Wessex were not only politically separate but even at war.

It is curious to remark how much the great stepping-stones of Dunstan's life were those of political failure. He started life as a clerk and a courtier, likely by family influence to achieve a bishopric if he so willed. Disgrace at court and illness brought him to the monastic habit and a devout life. A few years as counsellor to King Edmund brought him once more to the royal disfavour, and he learnt then to govern a monastery. The exile which he incurred with another monarch's wrath showed him a monastic revival greater than his own. He learnt the lesson and brought home with him the intention of benefiting by his experience abroad. Shortly after this Archbishop Oda, his friend, sent for a young nephew who had been trained in the reformed abbey of Fleury to come back to England. Oda was dead before the young Oswald came, but Dunstan, leaving Worcester a few years later, arranged that Oswald should succeed. Ethelwold, friend and pupil of Dunstan, either during

[1] Mem., 29, 57.
[2] Mem., 104.

Dunstan's exile or immediately after, sent their pupil Osgar to Fleury, there to learn the reforms which Odo of Cluny had introduced.[1] Shortly afterwards he brought monks from Corbie over to Abingdon to teach his own subjects their method of singing and reading.[2]

It is true that Dunstan's friends had long been interested like him in the Benedictine reform of the Continent, but these efforts to bring it to England, made by men who looked to Dunstan as a leader, and synchronizing as they did with his return from Flanders, seem more than fortuitous. Whether Dunstan inspired them or not his own activities at this time were more political. He became a great man at Edgar's Mercian court and, when the bishopric of London fell vacant, they induced him to add its burden to his diocese of Worcester. As a political adviser to the young king he set forth his old ideal, which would make the monarch a stern repressor of wrong-doers, a champion of justice rather than a military leader. Above all he urged the king to drive through a reform of the clerks attached to collegiate churches, that they might be forced to live according to the canons long since set forth in ecclesiastical councils.

In neither plan was he immediately successful. Edgar was willing and anxious to restore the

[1] A.R., 110.
[2] A.R., 111.

monastic life, but he hesitated at a policy which must bring him into conflict with many of his nobles. Indeed, Dunstan's stern rigour seems to have built up a party opposed to him and determined to prevent his accession to power. Oda, in consecrating Dunstan, had named him coadjutor and successor to the see of Canterbury despite the protests of the clergy and nobles.[1] In the year 958 A.D. the archbishop died, but his wishes, which must also have been those of his party, were set aside and Elfsige, bishop of Winchester, by his influence at court, was chosen and sent to Rome to seek the pallium of metropolitical authority from the Pope.[2] This appointment may just possibly have been due to Edwy who did not die till 959 A.D. But even when Elfsige, fortunately for England, died in the Alpine passes, the claims of Dunstan were again ignored. It may have been, as a late biographer says (the story does not seem to have been taken from early records for it reads more like a suggestion), that Dunstan himself was unwilling, but no great pressure seems to have been used to bring him to a more willing frame of mind. Rather, the king (Edgar now governed the whole country south of the Humber) and his nobles chose the bishop of Dorset, Brythelme, and chose him because he was famous for his mild ways. But

[1] Mem., 60, 292.
[2] Mem., 38.

an archbishop of Canterbury had work in those days which required governing powers. He was to a large extent responsible for the government of the city in which his see was fixed. Even the bishop of Rochester, in some ways merely a suffragan of Canterbury, was so much a ruler that a king of this time, having a quarrel with the bishop, found himself forced to lay siege to the city.[1] Brythelme was soon found to be useless for such a post and Edgar, who wanted a ruler of men even more than one who would not teach the monarch, sent Brythelme back to less arduous work.

It was then that Dunstan was made archbishop and went to Rome to receive the pallium from the hands of John XII. During the troubled times of the tenth century civil disorder and invasions from without had made the communications of the Christian bishops extremely difficult. The worst results had occurred in the discipline of the Church, for the papacy was no longer able to make its influence felt or its commands obeyed by the bishops of countries far from Rome. Indeed each see had become for practical purposes independent of canonical control, and it is remarkable evidence of the whole-hearted belief in papal supremacy that no schism was attempted by any of the bishops. To provide in a measure for the difficulties of the age the Popes had begun to

[1] Mem., 117.

delegate a large measure of their powers to the metropolitan bishops in each province. Such was at this time their practice in Germany, where the archbishop of Mainz had authority over all the trans-rhenane bishops. A similar position may have been assigned to the archbishops of Canterbury, and with it may have been associated the practice by which, on appointment, they were required to go to Rome to receive the pallium of metropolitan authority. Such visits had arisen in England because of the special relation of its conversion with Gregory I, and they do not seem to have been regarded then as necessary; but before Oda was made archbishop they had already become so, and Dunstan (like Elfsige) visited Rome before he took up his new work.[1] Whether the conferring of delegated authority on the archbishop was already customary is matter of speculation; at least by reason of the Roman visit the Popes were able still to exercise some slight control. The appointments to other sees were made by the bishops of the province and the election by cathedral chapters was not much more than a formality. In these appointments the king and nobles no doubt played a very important part, as they did all over Europe, and the king in particular could often in practice make the appointments himself. But the archbishop of Canterbury was one of the most powerful magnates in

[1] Mem., 40.

England, if only because of the wealth he controlled. So long as the Pope could fashion his policy, the English episcopate, and therefore English religious life, was not entirely withdrawn from canonical control. John XII, who conferred the pallium on Dunstan, was, according to the accounts which have survived of him, an altogether unworthy successor of Peter. Nevertheless he seems to have encouraged the new archbishop in the work of reform which the latter had set before him. The terms of the bull by which metropolitan powers were conferred were no doubt suggested by the recipient, but the Pope's consent was necessary to the statement that he should exercise a general care of the churches in England. Dunstan himself seems to have learnt confidence in the Roman see, for in one at least of the later troubles he had recourse to the Pope—a namesake of John XII—and received approval or authority for the line of action he was taking.

The bull by which the pallium was conferred was dated on the 1st October, 960 A.D. The journey across the Alps was a long one, and Dunstan may also have visited various monasteries on his way. His arrival in England was probably not long before he secured the appointment to the see of Worcester, vacant by his own elevation, of Oswald, that nephew of Oda's who had spent a long training in the reformed abbey of Fleury. This took place in the year 961 A.D.; Dunstan was

about fifty years old and from then till his death in the year 988 A.D. he was making the history of the Church and people of England.

IV

Before looking at that work in its public aspects it is well to form a picture of the daily life of the man. The greater part of it was spent at Canterbury itself and, fortunately, the earliest biographer was a monk at S. Augustine's, and almost certainly had been a boy there when Dunstan was archbishop. He regarded it as a matter of course that, on the chief festivals of the Church, the archbishop should celebrate the Divine Liturgy in his cathedral and should give communion to the faithful. Dunstan was also a great preacher, and it was apparently understood that on these occasions he should give an instruction to his people. Other chroniclers speak of his preaching, both at the foundations of churches[1] and also to those who were not yet Christians,[2] as though some groups of Danes remained still unconverted in England of the mid-tenth century. Apart from festivals, however, the archbishop's day was largely taken up with the work of charity and justice. Both the relief of the poor and the

[1] Mem., 49.
[2] Mem., 109, 315.

settlement of quarrels still belonged to the personal work of a ruler of the Church who aspired worthily to carry out his duties. In such tasks Dunstan was not merely an arbitrator. He was in a real sense a ruler of his folk and in his court injustice could be remedied.[1] Still greater, perhaps, was the business of enforcing the Church's rules of marriage—always a difficulty among people who have not long been converted. In this work it is clear that Dunstan could be stern and angry. Throughout his life his wrath against evil-doers called constantly for notice, and a chance remark of his biographers shows that he did not learn to talk suavely to the unrighteous even after he became archbishop of Canterbury.[2] This anger, however, was reserved strictly for wrong-doers, and particularly for such as were nobles. The common folk loved him and, when he came to the cathedral for what was to be his last Mass, they would not let him leave till he had preached them three sermons.[3] Still pleasanter to remember is that, in a hard age, schoolboys looked back to him as one who strove to lighten the heavy burden of discipline.[4] Before he had been dead more than a few years they used to pray to him to save them from the whippings which the monks made

[1] Mem., 49.
[2] Mem., 110.
[3] Mem., 315.
[4] Mem., 141.

part of the curriculum. Despite the pressure of business Dunstan did not relax his own studies. Dawn found him studying the Scriptures and fathers, and, a curious passion for those days, he was known to be a corrector of faulty texts.[1] Nothing more is heard of his gifts as musician and designer. Above all, however, this earliest biographer remarked on the fact that Dunstan, as archbishop, observed the devotional practices of a simple monk. He spent a large part of every night in the recitation of the psalms according to the rule of S. Benedict; and as he recited them he went from church to church of his city.[2] This man of restless energy seems to have done with very little sleep other than the siesta which he took after midday dinner. But if he was restless at night, and ready to anger against those who would not obey the Church, he found in age great peace and rest in his religion. Men noticed that from the most trying sessions of his court he would turn at once to prayer, and be serene in his intercourse with God. In his early days he had wrestled with the evil one and believed that he had been attacked by devils in the forms of bears and wolves. It would need a saint to judge whether Dunstan was mistaken, nor do we know in detail his own account of the matter. But at least the agony of spirit which such stories indicate passed

[1] Mem., 49.
[2] Mem., 48.

as he grew older. Henceforth his visions were of the saints, and men noticed in his prayers only that sweet sorrow which the monks called the gift of tears.[1]

For a quarter of a century Dunstan lived the life of an ideal bishop, preaching to his people, ministering to their spiritual necessities, distributing alms, settling their quarrels, rebuking their vices. But during this busy episcopate he found time to achieve great things for Church and State in England. His name has come down to us as the patron and restorer of monasticism. There is much truth in the legend. Early in the reign of King Edgar he persuaded that monarch to appoint to vacant sees only those who had already learnt to serve God by the discipline of monastic rule. So Ethelwold, Dunstan's former pupil at Glastonbury, was made bishop of Winchester; Oswald, who had been trained at Fleury, was made bishop of Worcester, and then, retaining Worcester, was promoted to the archbishopric of York. Later Ælfric, abbot of Malmesbury, was made bishop of Crediton, and Elfege, abbot of Bath, succeeded Ethelwold at Winchester. All these appointments were made by Dunstan's influence. At the same time he laboured to found or restore monastic life in England. One of his biographers asserts that five monasteries owed their foundation to him.[2]

[1] Mem., 314.
[2] Mem., 89, 301.

Of Westminster alone probably is this strictly accurate, but the words are almost a true description of his work at Malmesbury, Bath and Glastonbury. Ethelwold, his pupil, founded Winchester, Peterborough and Ely; Oswald, his friend, founded Ramsey, Winchelcombe and Worcester.[1]

These great institutions were not created by a mere fiat of the archbishop. Land had to be bought to endow the monks, and its profitable employment arranged for. It required a man versed in temporal matters to do this well, and the burden of it fell on episcopal founders. The charters recording Oswald's administration of the Worcester property have survived, and they constitute in themselves a remarkable development of private law. So, too, the fostering of sound learning in the monasteries could not be left to the inspiration of the brethren. Ethelwold had to bring monks from Corbie. Oswald planted the study of mathematics in England by bringing Abbo from his old monastery of Fleury.[2] The biographers of Dunstan speak of his care for manuscripts and his labours at their correction, and dwell in the same connection on the famous men who owed their training to him.[3] In the Middle Ages S. Augustine's Canterbury became one of

[1] Mem., 303, 304.
[2] A.R., 117.
[3] Mem., 301.

the great libraries of Europe, and it may be that this tradition was begun by Dunstan himself.

These developments, however, though necessary for the restoration of monasticism, were not fundamental. The great institution which had done so much for Europe had decayed not because learning had been neglected, nor because its wealth had been seized by secular princes, but because there had not been a sufficient discipline of worship. The energy of a monastery, whether for the cultivation of the soil or for the labours of learning, depended on the regularity of the spiritual life and the maintenance of corporate devotion. All that savoured of whimsical individualism or extravagance was an enemy of that steady unceasing labour which was so necessary to a Europe whose social life was insecure and intermittent. Reforms were being brought to England from various monasteries on the Continent and, each of them good in themselves, they might easily have added to the enmities and jealousies which readily divided districts and monasteries in tenth-century England. The three great monastic bishops saw the danger, and assembled a synod at Winchester under King Edgar, so that they might agree on a scheme of government to be applied in all the monasteries of England. A standardized rule (the *regularis concordia*) was drawn up; it allowed for future modifications, it

permitted even the introduction of accidental private devotions, but, based on the wise plan of Benedict, as enlarged by his namesake of Aniane, it set out a programme for the monks of tenth-century England wherein most of their day would be spent in the recitation of the divine office, and some four or five devoted regularly to reading and study. Though Dunstan himself took no part in the actual synod there can be little doubt that he was consulted in the drawing up of the rule.[1] Throughout it there is a strange insistence on the value of monasticism to the country as a whole. The constant duty of earnest prayer for the ruler may well have been emphasized by one who had spent much of his time at the courts of the Wessex kings. So, too, the need of protecting monasteries from the power of local nobles probably inspired the clause which put all those for men under the king's protection, all those for women under the queen's. In later years this might and did lead to grave abuses, but at the time it was a necessary guard against the greed of the Saxon nobles.

All historians of tenth-century England have recognized Dunstan's work in the monastic renaissance. There has, indeed, been exaggeration of his achievement. Both those who venerate and those who have criticized him have supposed that he set out deliberately to replace collegiate

[1] A.R., 143 *sqq.*

clerical life by monasticism. As a fact it is true that when he became archbishop the clergy of several cathedrals were clerks bound by no monastic rule. It is also true that at Winchester and Worcester certainly, and possibly also at Canterbury, these canons, as they were afterwards called, were replaced by monks and, although Dunstan may not have taken direct part in the proceedings which were carried through by his friends Ethelwold and Oswald, he certainly approved and may have directed the movement. From these facts some have said that he thought no further good could be wrought by the corporation of secular clergy; others have said that his purpose was to establish monasticism wherever he could. But the writers who were nearest to his time, and who by their profession were bound to approve of the increase of monasteries, did not regard Dunstan as impelled by either of these motives. Their attitude was expressed by the vision of Ælfgar, Dunstan's pupil, wherein the archbishop sat on his throne teaching the clergy the rules of canonical life.[1]

This exactly expresses the quarrel between Dunstan and the secular clerks. The most famous case is that of Winchester where the secular clerks of the old minster were driven out by force and their places taken by monks. Dr. Armytage Robinson has pointed out the person responsible

[1] Mem., 120.

for this action was not Dunstan, nor even perhaps Bishop Ethelwold, but King Edgar himself in whose capital it took place and by whose servant, Wulstan, the eviction was made.[1] But it seems still to be accepted that the real complaint against the secular clergy was that they were married and that, for good or evil, Dunstan was trying to enforce the ideal of celibacy, whether the stories of evil living are later exaggerations or not. Now the recorded complaints suggest a wider issue. The lists given follow a definite order where the more general objections come first and then the more grievous cases which cause scandal.[2] There was not, one notices with some surprise, any failure to provide for the services of the cathedral churches. Indeed at the time of the eviction at Winchester the clerks were engaged in singing the divine office. The most that could be alleged against some clerks, who were also priests, was that they neglected their turns for singing Mass, providing for it presumably by hiring another priest. Nor even could it be said that they were ignorant. The accusation most nearly touching this was that they hurried the saying of office, and understood no more than the grammatical meaning of the words. But the general accusation is that they engaged in commerce and hunting, and the abuses alleged against some of them were

[1] A.R., 115.
[2] Mem., 49, 113, 300.

that they married, that some also were licentious, sending away their irregular wives and taking others.[1] What does it amount to? First let us remember that many of these clerks were not priests, although all were bound by the benefices they occupied to serve in the worship of the Church. Then the accusations reduce to this: that apart from the actual worship, which they did not neglect, these clerks lived as laymen, practising the virtues and the vices current in the society in which they lived. The lives of clerics, however, were subject by the Church to laws which were not binding on laymen. Council after council of the eighth and ninth centuries had repeated the ancient injunctions which forbade a clerk to engage in commerce or in the ordinary amusements of laymen, and equally, of course, forbade those in sacred orders to marry. The ideal of clerical life which the Church set forth was one which should raise all who belonged to her in this special way above the ordinary pursuits and pleasures of secular life. To one who, like Dunstan, was determined to enforce this ideal, the behaviour of these secular clerks, even if they were upright men, even if they were unmarried, was a reproach and scandal. If they wished to be clerks, if they wished to devote themselves to the service and worship of the Church for which their benefices were provided, they must accept the discipline of

[1] Mem., 300.

the Church. So he gave them the alternative, "either live canonically or surrender your benefices." [1]

Of this reform of Dunstan's there are very few records. A great deal of it was accomplished by the appointment of diocesan bishops who shared his reverence for the law of the Church, and through them, no doubt, something was done in the parishes of England. The spectacular aspect of the reform began when it was applied in the cathedral churches. These had passed into the hands of noble families, who naturally enough took the side of their members. At Winchester even the benefices seem to have become hereditary, but at Worcester, and probably elsewhere, the clerics were noble simply by reason of influence in their appointment. Even King Edgar, who had been ready to adopt the appointment of monastic bishops and to assist the foundation of monasteries, only came to Dunstan's assistance after some delay and much exhortation.[2] Even then it was no easy matter to effect the reform. The secular clerks gave general promises readily enough but soon transgressed the canons they were pledged to obey.[3] Finally Dunstan approved the substitution of monks for the clerks who could not be trusted.

[1] Mem., 113, 300.
[2] Mem., 300.
[3] *Ibid.*

The crisis came at Winchester. There, apparently, Bishop Ethelwold introduced a group of monks and, when the clerks refused to accept the rules of clerical life, he gave them the choice of accepting the monastic habit or surrendering their benefices. Only a few became monks and, with the aid of the king, the remainder were evicted and their stalls given to the monks. How far Dunstan approved this act is not certain, but the essential moderation and fairness of his character is shown in two incidents which arose from it. The clerks did not accept the eviction but claimed that they had been wronged. Dunstan, who might have silenced this attempt by authority, consented to discuss the matter.[1] The clerks were evidently supported by a considerable body of nobles and Dunstan was for some time undecided what to do. According to a writer of about one hundred years later a crucifix gave miraculous utterance and decided the matter in favour of the monks. Since the story does not appear in the account of the earlier biographer it must be regarded as doubtful. Certainly, however, Dunstan saw that the action of Ethelwold, even if justified by special circumstances, stood in need of confirmation. He put the whole question before Pope John XIII and obtained from him approval for the intrusion of the monks, and a ruling that henceforth the head

[1] Mem., 113.

of the chapter should be a man trained to monastic observance.[1]

A second instance of Dunstan's fairness can be gathered from the story of Alwold. This wealthy man, being sick, decided to become a monk. With returning health he found the rule a burden and finally left the monastery. As was customary, he had given to it a small part of his possessions, and these he now resumed much to the indignation of the brethren. King Ethelred, however (the incident occurred in his reign), upheld the right of Alwold to his property, so the monks appealed to Dunstan. The latter was never slow to rebuke Ethelred, for whom he appears to have had a hearty contempt. But in this case the legal question had been laboriously (even if unjustly) decided and Dunstan would not stir.[2] Though he condemned Alwold he bade the monks seek redress from heaven.

Even against the dispossessed clerks of Winchester Dunstan did not always uphold the claims of the monks. When Bishop Ethelwold died in 984 A.D. both parties claimed the right to have a voice in choosing their successor. As far as canonical regulations went the choice lay seemingly with the bishops of the province, subject to the formal consent of the cathedral clergy. Dunstan did not apparently deny that the clerks still had

[1] Mem., 211 and 365.
[2] Mem., 313.

some sort of right to be heard in the choice of a bishop: he prayed, we are told, that God would guide those of goodwill in either party.[1] It is probable that the monks at Winchester wanted to choose the bishop from amongst their own number but Dunstan did not accede to their request. He brought in as bishop Elphege, the abbot of Bath, who was known apparently for his sympathy with the legitimate aspirations of either party.[2] It would seem indeed that Dunstan disapproved of the methods employed by Ethelwold, for he evidently took care that his successor should be a man less likely to stir up strife. On the other hand, however, Dunstan would not allow any return to the secularization of the lives of churchmen. At Winchester the benefices had been hereditary and, some fifteen years after Ethelwold's drastic action, the heirs of the dispossessed clerks secured a Scottish bishop to defend their claims. But Dunstan refused to consider reopening the quarrel.[3] He had been willing to acknowledge that the original clerks had a claim to fair play, but he would not listen to a defence of the system which they had represented.

Dunstan's labours to achieve a high standard of discipline amongst the clergy was perhaps his greatest work for England. Most of the disorders

[1] Mem., 312.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Mem., 313.

of Europe of the tenth and eleventh centuries came from a refusal to accept the rule of law. The lamentations of church councils could have no effect unless men had before their eyes the example of lives governed by strict regulation, and men looked to the clergy to set them such example. In so far, then, as Dunstan succeeded with the clergy, he made it easier for secular society to be law-abiding, and if England suffered less than other civilized lands during that period of disorder it was in a large measure due to its great archbishop. But while stressing the importance of clerical discipline in an age which venerated the Church we should not forget that Dunstan was able also to act directly on secular society. The contact between Church and State takes place in all ages in the family. It does so indirectly because a priesthood which is celibate, and only then, is taken from secular society and reacts on it through the family. It does so directly because the Church, by enforcing her rules of marriage, can teach the restraint of law in the most natural affair of life. So it is not surprising to find that Dunstan's biographers remark on the care with which he exercised his authority in this matter.[1] Not only was he unwearied in restoring conjugal peace, but he also carried on a campaign against all irregular marriages. Such an attitude brought him into conflict with the Saxon nobles who had always

[1] Mem., 110, 300.

found the ecclesiastical law of marriage a burden to the flesh. He did not hesitate to resist the king nor to refuse to obey a papal letter which, he argued, was obtained by deception. There is no reason to suppose any defiance of papal authority, and to do so would be to read into the tenth century the conditions of the thirteenth; in Dunstan's time the Roman curia was not sufficiently organized, nor was communication so well established, as to render it possible for a layman to obtain judgment at Rome. The authority which the Popes had conferred on Dunstan was amply sufficient to justify him in rejecting a letter of dispensation, especially if (as the biographer's phrase suggests) he was able to suspect the grounds on which it had been asked. So much has been made of this incident that there is danger of overlooking another phrase which is attributed to the archbishop. The reason he gave for his insistence on the laws of marriage was that the children of irregular unions were usually devoid of virtue and lacking in patriotism.[1] Such a judgment was so alien to the literary traditions of the Middle Ages that we may well believe that William of Malmesbury, who records it, had got hold of Dunstan's own words. If so, it shows the archbishop not only as an acute observer of reality, but also as one who realized the social importance of marriage law.

[1] Mem., 314.

This preoccupation with the country's welfare is brought out also in Dunstan's insistence on a rigid enforcement of criminal law. He regarded the punishment of evil-doers as, in some sense, a religious act, for he envisaged the criminal chiefly as an enemy of good men. Especially was he severe against the coiners of false money, whom he accused of enriching themselves at the expense of the people, and he fully approved the savage punishments which were decreed against those repeatedly guilty of these offences.[1]

There has probably been considerable exaggeration of the part which Dunstan played in secular business during the reign of Edgar. It is natural for all biographers to exaggerate by general phrases the part which their hero has played, and the monks who described the high virtue of England's great archbishop were no exception to this rule. But they had the merit also of inserting such incidents as could be remembered, dramatizing them a little, particularly as to the words of their characters; and from these incidents it is possible to form a better conception of Dunstan's relations with Edgar and his successors. There is first the incident of Edgar and the lady who, according to one biographer, was a nun; according to another, had been taken into a convent to protect her virtue.[2] The safeguard of the Church was beaten down by

[1] Mem., 49, 110.
[2] Mem., 111.

the impetuous young man. But he reckoned without Dunstan, thinking, perhaps, that an archbishop of Canterbury might overlook the peccadilloes of the royal founder of monasteries. Dunstan, apparently in full court, refused to give the king his hand till the sinner had repented. Nor did he make reconciliation easy. According to the legend, which may be exaggerated but is certainly founded on truth, the penance imposed on the king was that he should not wear the crown, the symbol of his rank, for seven years: a penance which was in every sense of the word extremely public. And from the contrite king Dunstan also extracted consent to his policy of enforcing the canons of the Church on those clerks who were of noble family.[1]

Another incident is probably to be attributed to the later years of the reign. Dunstan had been asked by the king to delay singing Mass one Sunday at court till the royal party returned from the hunt. Apparently it was a normal request and Dunstan agreed. But while waiting in the church Dunstan had a vision of a Mass in the courts of heaven, and when the royal clerks burst in to say that the king was at hand and the archbishop should begin at once, the latter replied that Mass was already said, and he seized the opportunity to forbid the king his Sunday hunting.[2]

[1] Mem., 112.
[2] Mem., 207.

But Dunstan does not appear merely as the upright mentor rebuking royal sins and negligence and risking his own influence by such action. When Edgar died in 975 A.D. he left two sons, half-brothers, Edward and Ethelred. The mother of the latter was still alive and was connected by birth with a considerable party of the nobles who were ready to press the claims of her son. The technical reason alleged was that Edward had been born before his mother was crowned; indeed, there was a rumour current later that she was the lady for whose sake Edgar had incurred the wrath of the Church.[1] But the real cause of the nobles' desire to set aside the elder son was that he represented the tradition of strict justice which his father had begun. It would be an anachronism to speak of the right of the nobles to elect their king. Certainly such right was never exercised by majority voting: it had been in the past a method of saying that that member of the royal house who had the stronger party secured the throne. On this occasion Dunstan, representing the Church, secured the acceptance of Edward; but he did so on the ground that the latter was legitimate, exalting the royal house above the nobles who constituted the court. Probably it was at the coronation of Edward that Dunstan imposed an oath on the new king and kept record of it. Its terms were: "In the name of the Holy Trinity I

[1] Mem., 114.

promise three things to the Christian people and my subjects: first, that God's Church and all Christian people of my dominions hold true peace; the second is that I forbid robbery and all unrighteous things to all orders; the third, that I promise and enjoin in all dooms justice and mercy, that the gracious and merciful God in His everlasting mercy may forgive us all." [1] Again we should not regard this as in any sense a contract, nor an attempt to make the Saxon monarchy constitutional—ideas which were to come only in a later age. But it was the mark of a transformation: the Wessex monarchy had been military and its right to govern England had been based on conquest. The passage from this idea to that of the monarch-lawgiver was not easy, but it had already begun, and Dunstan, by imposing this oath, gave it a religious sanction and the blessing of the Church.

In these acts of Dunstan, however, we need not suppose him to have had any clear-cut notions of political theory. When occasion forced him to take part in political affairs he did but take the line natural to one imbued with the mystical conception of justice and order which was part of the ecclesiastical tradition. But this made his later disappointment no less keen. The reigns of Edgar and Edward gave him hope of seeing those traditions incarnate in English social life. But

[1] Mem., 355.

Edward was murdered after a reign of five years. Ethelred, still a child, succeeded and the rule of the nobles returned. It seems certain that Dunstan openly accused the queen-mother and her party of being guilty of Edward's murder, and from this date his exclusion from political affairs must be dated. Ethelred, on reaching manhood, showed no inclination to recapture the position which his father had won for kingship. Dunstan's despair for England is reflected in the prophecies of future woes which the biographers put into his mouth.[1] His disdain for Ethelred is shown by the incident of the siege of Rochester. Ethelred had quarrelled with the bishop and was besieging the city. Dunstan sought to persuade the king to withdraw his troops but in vain; finally he offered him a sum of money and obtained thus what had been refused before.

The Catholic Church has canonized men and women who differ in many ways. They have come from all kinds of social environment; their achievements in the world have been no less various; in temperament and even in character they have had little in common. But one and all seem to have shared, as death approached, a sense of the failure in their earthly task. This is naturally true of the martyrs and is almost a necessary condition of that type of sanctity. But it is no less true of the great ecclesiastical rulers who

[1] Mem., 117.

wrought so much for Europe in the dark days before the Middle Ages. Ambrose saw his emperors murdered and the Roman State, which he had striven to fashion as the City of God, breaking down under the pressure of its administrative burden; Martin of Tours spent the last ten years of his life in practical isolation from most of the bishops of his country; Wilfrid saw himself and his work superseded by Theodore of Tarsus, the representative of the Roman see whose control he had sought to strengthen. It was not merely that sanctity taught these men to be dissatisfied with the world and its victories: objectively, also, their labours came for a time to nothing, the success at which they aimed became impossible. So it was with Dunstan. He had hoped to refashion England as a Christian country and to make her monarchs sensible of their divine mission and responsibility. Ethelred viewed government as a merchant regards his trade, and the justice which Dunstan laboured to create was sold to the highest bidder; the nobles whom Dunstan tried to discipline recovered their independence. In these circumstances it is not surprising to find that the stories of Dunstan's last days centre at Canterbury. He died not as a statesman but as a bishop, preaching to his people, offering the Christian sacrifice for them, giving them holy communion. He did it for the last time on Ascension Day, 988 A.D. He died on the following Saturday. It

was a fitting end to his life. The indirect effect on English civilization of his reforms of the clergy and of monasteries was far more important than the short periods of his direct political influence. Perhaps his inflexible character, which made him unsuitable for the latter, made his action in the former case the more permanent. The great ecclesiastical tradition which he had fashioned for England survived, and succeeded in ways he had not dreamt of. The Pagan invaders overthrew the secular state, but the Church was vigorous enough to tame them; Canute and his Danes adopted the Christianity of the men they conquered. The nobles and the system they stood for overthrew the canonical discipline which Dunstan imposed on the clergy; Stigand, the archbishop of Canterbury in Edward the Confessor's reign, was a schismatic, a pluralist, and a simoniac. But the training which Dunstan and his friends instituted kept the clergy and the monks more worthy than the bishops of their calling. When Lanfranc and his Normans came to England they found disorder in the Church, but it was chiefly in the high places; the lesser men had traditions good enough to enable them to respond quickly to the reforms of Gregory VII.

NOTE

The early Lives of S. Dunstan were printed by Bishop Stubbs in the Rolls Series under the title *Memorials of S. Dunstan*. They remain the chief sources for his biography, and the critical introduction shows their relative merits. Apart from this the finest study is that of Dr. Armitage Robinson entitled *The Times of S. Dunstan* (Ford Lectures, 1922).

I have only presumed to differ on one point from Dr. Stubbs's introduction. I cannot see the evidence for attributing to S. Dunstan any very great direct political work under King Edred. The general statements of the Lives do not seem to me to warrant any suggestion that Dunstan was "prime minister," to use the word of Dr. Stubbs.

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